Indian Freedom Fighters Series–53
Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

AUROBINDO GHOSE

Revolutionary and Reformer

S R BAKSHI

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

The theme deals with the life-sketch of great patriot who had deep linkage with the freedom struggle against the colonial rule. At a fairly young age he adopted the anti-Raj stance. Undoubtedly he gained much prominence as a public leader on account of his unique sacrifices for the masses of India. In Pondicherry, he launched several developmental schemes for the upliftment of the socio-economic status of his people. He led a simple life in accordance with the Indian traditions. This work would be useful for teachers, students and research scholars in India and abroad.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Gran

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

AUROBINDO GHOSE

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Indian Freedom Fighters Series-48

Aurobindo Ghosh

Revolutionary and Reformer

G.M. College of Education
Raipur, Bantalab
Jammu.
Acc. No. 5438/6(III)
Dated 17.5.03

S.R. BAKSHI

G.M.C.E.J
5438

Anmol Publications Pvt. Ltd.
New Delhi-110 002

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

ANMOL PUBLICATIONS PVT. LTD.
4374/4B, Ansari Road
Daryaganj, New Delhi-110 002

Aurobindo Ghosh

First Edition 1994

© Author

ISBN 81-7041-702-3

PRINTED IN INDIA

Published by J.L. Kumar for Anmol Publications, Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi.
Printed at Renu Printers, Delhi.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Preface

Aurobindo Ghose played a significant role during the freedom movement in our sub-continent. At a fairly young age he adopted an anti-Raj stance and began to support the political movement against the colonial rule. During the anti-colonial agitation in Bengal in the first decade of the twentieth century, he played a dominant role in every respect. Later on, he shifted to Pondicherry and opened a huge ashram there. He devoted the rest of his life for the upliftment of socio-economic condition of the people of India. He has written several books which have deep bearing on our society and culture.

I have collected the material from Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, Sapru House Library and Indian Council of Historical Research Library, New Delhi. I feel beholden to the authorities of these institutions for helping me during my researches.

S. R. Bakshi

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Contents

Preface v

1. Early Career 1
2. In England 18
3. In Prison 62
4. The Debate 103
5. Alipur Conspiracy Case 122
6. The Karmayogi 167

Chronology 203
Glossary 209
Index 213

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

1

Early Career

Aurobindo Ghose was born at Calcutta on the 15th August 1872, the third son of Dr. Krishnadhan Ghose and Srimati Swarnalata Devi,—non sine dis animosus infans (a brave babe, surely, and some god's special care) :

Aurobindo's father, Dr. Krishnadhan,—ture to his own deep convictions and in conformity with the practice of many other educated Indians of his time who had capitulated to the glamour of the West—wished to give his children a wholly European type of education. He therefore sent Aurobindo, along with his brothers Benoybhushan and Manmohan, to the Loretto Convent School at Darjeeling. Aurobindo was then only five years old !

We know little about Aurobindo's school life, but it appeare his teachers in Darjeeling were profoundly impressed by his sparking and wideawake intelligence and the singular sweetness of his nature. The companious of the Ghose brothers in the school and in the boarding-house were all English children and, of course, English was the sole medium of instruction in school and the channel of communication outside. A sort of exile in his own country, Aurobindo thus started lisping in English at the age of five : "in the shadow of the Himalayas, in sight of the wonderful snow-capped peaks, even in their native land they were brought up in alien surroundings."

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

While Aurobindo's two brothers were sent to the Manchester Grammar School, Aurobindo himself was educated privately by Mr. and Mrs. Drewett. Drewett was an accomplished Latin scholar; he did not teach Aurobindo Greek, but grounded him well in Latin. It appears Aurobindo also played cricket in Mr. Drewett's gardan, though not at all well! Presently the Drewetts had to leave Manchester for Australia, and hence Aurobindo was sent to St. Paul's School, London, in 1885. The Head Master of St. Paul's, impressed by Aurobindo's character and abilities, too him up to ground him in Greek, and then pushed him rapidly into the higher classes of the school.

Five years more passed; young Aurobindo had acquired a very considerable proficiency in the classics and he was therefore enabled to proceed to King's College, Combridge, with a Senior Classical Scholarship of the value of £80 per year. Mr. Oscar Browning, then a well-known figure at Cambridge, immediately recognized Aurobindo's unusual talents.

Aurobindo had given his whole-hearted attention to the classics at Manchester and at St. Paul's; but even at St. Paul's in the last three years he simply went through his prescribed school course and spent most of his spare time in general reading, giving particular attention to English poetry, literature and fiction, French literature, and the history of ancient, mediaeval and modern Europe. He spent much time too in writing poetry. As for the prescribed courses of studies, they engaged but little of his time; he was already at ease in them and did not therefore think it necessary or profitable to labour over them any longer. All the same, he was able to win all the prizes in King's College in one year for Greek and Latin verse, etc.

In 1890, Aurobindo appeared for the Indian Civil Service examination and passed it with credit, scoring record marks in Greek and Latin. At the end of the period of probation, however, he avoided appearing for the departmental Riding examination. He felt no call for the I.C.S. and wished to

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

escape from that bondage. By certain manoeuvres he managed to get himself disqualified for Riding without himself rejecting the service, which he knew his family would not have allowed him to do.

In the meantime, Sir Aurobindo was pursuing his studies in many directions. He spent some time also over learning Italian, some Germen and a little Spanish. In due coure, he passed the First Part of the Classical Tripos examination in the first class. It is on passing this First Part that the degree of B. A. is usually given; but as he had only two years at his disposal, he had to pass it in his second year at Cambridge. But as the First Part gives the degree only if it is taken in the third year, Aurobindo, since he had taken the degree in third second year, would have had to appear for the Second Part of the Tripos in the fourth year to qualify for the degree. He might even so have got the degree if he had made an application for it, but he did not care to do so. He did not presumably think a degree as such valuable, since he had then no intention of laking up a purely academic career.

It must be added here that during this period Dr. Krishnadhan's remittances to his sons tended to be both irregular and inadequate; necessarily, therefore, Aurobindo, along with Benoybhushan and Manmohan, was often in straitened circumstances. He experienced in a real measure "hardships," and even "starvation"; but he managed safely to pull through somehow with the help of his scholarship and the practice of economy.

Aurobindo was barely twenty years old, but he had even at that early and tender age achieved rare academic distinctions. He had mastered Greek and Latin, English and French; and he had also acquired sufficient familiarity with other continental languages like German and Italian. In short, he had won the master-key that was to unlock the sumless treasuries of Western culture. Aurobindo was young and earnest and not seldom taciturn and meditative; he was a learned young man, he was possessed of a subtle intelligence and a receptive memory. He was sensitive to beauty in man and Nature, he

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

responded to the authentic with his whole soul, he watched with abhorrence the thousand and one instances of man's cruelty to man; inded, he had felt even from early childhood a strong hatred and disgust for all kinds of cruelty and oppression, and as he grew older the feeling but progressively deepened and grew more and more poignant. For fourteen years he had lived in England, divorced from the culture of his forefathers; he had developed "foreign tastes and tendencies" and he had been "denationalized" like his own country itself. But he was destined to change all that and to re-nationalize himself !

In the meantime, Aurobindo was in search of a suitable job. He obtained, with the help of James Cotton, Sir Henry Cotton's brother, an introduction to H.H. the late Sayaji Rao, Gaekwar of Baroda, during his visit to England; the interviews has a success, and Aurobindo secured a promising appointment in the Baroda State Service. He accordingly left England for India in February 1893.

Aurobindo had other things also to occupy his thoughts,—politics, for instance, and the glamorous careers of poets and politicians. His Hic Jacet (Glasnevin Cemetery and Charles Stewart Parnell 1891 are both vigorous expressions of Au robindo's political sensibility. Their clarity and strength make the poems immediately effective.

Sir Aurobindo was now in Baroda, and he spent the next thirteen years, from 1893 to 1906; in the Baroda State Service. He was put first in the Settlement Department, not as an officer, but to learn work; then make Stamps and Revenue Departments; he was also for some time put to work in the Secretariate for drawing up dispatches, etc. Finally he . . . ted towards the Baroda College and entered is, at first as part-time lecturer in French, afterwards as a regular professor teaching English; and finally, he become Vice-Principal of the College. Meanwhile whenever he thought fit, the Maharaja would and for Sri Aurobindo for writing letters, composing speeches or drawing up documents of various kinds which needed special care in the phrasing of the language. At

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

one time, the Maharaja asked Sri Aurobindo to instruct him in English grammar by giving exact and minute rules for each construction, etc. But all this was quite informal, and he was called for the occasion to do miscellaneous things like the writings of an order, or a letter to the British Government, or some other document. Once Sri Aurobindo was specially sent for to Ooty in order to prepare a precis of the whole Bapat case and the judicial opinions on it. He was also for a time at Naini Tal with the Maharaja. He was appointed regular Private Secretary to the Maharaja at the time of the Kashmir tour; but there was much friction between them during the tour, and accordingly the experiment was not repeated. On the whole, Sri Aurobindo was brilliant and quick and efficient in work, though he was not exactly the ideal servant for an Indian Maharaja. The Maharaja, on his part, gave Sri Aurobindo a certificate for ability and intelligence, but also for lack of punctuality and regularity. With the Court as such, however, Sri Aurobindo had nothing whatever to do during the whole course of his stay in Baroda.

B.C. Pal opines thus about his personality.

The youngest in age among those who stand in the forefront of the Nationalist propaganda in India, but in endowment, education, and character, perhaps, superior to them all—Aravinda seems distinctly marked out by Providence to play in the future of this movement a part not given to any of his colleagues and contemporaries. The other leaders of the movement have left their life behind them : Aravinda has his before him. Nationalism is their last love : it is Aravinda's first passion. They are burdened with the cares and responsibilities of large families or complex relations : Aravinda has a small family and practically no cumulative obligations. His only care is for his country—the mother, as he always calls her. His only recognised obligations are to her. Nationalism, at the best a concern of the intellect with some; at the lowest a political cry and aspiration with others, is with Aravinda a supreme passion of his soul.

Few, indeed, have grasped the full force and meaning of

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

the Nationalist ideal as Aravinda has done. But even of these very few—though their vision may be clear, their action is weak. Man cannot, by a fiat of his will at once recreate his life. Our Karma follows us with relentless insistence from day to day and form death to death. To see the vision of truth and yet not to be possessed by the supreme passion for it which burns up all other desires and snaps asunder, like ashen bands, all other ties and obligations—this is the divine tragedy of most finer natures. They have to cry out with St. Paul at every turn of life's tortuous path—"The Spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

But blesssed are they for whom this tragic antithesis between the ideal and the real has been cancelled : for whom to know the truth is to love it, to love the truth is to strive after it, and to strive after the truth is to attain it : in whom there is no disparity, either in time or degree, between the idea and its realisation : in whom the vision of the ideal, by its own intrinsic strength at once attunes every craving of the flesh, every movement of the mind, every motion of the heart, and every impulse of the will to itself : who have to strive for its realisation, not within, but without : who have to struggle not with their own Self, but with the Not-Self : who have to fight and conquer not themselves but others, in order to establish the kingdom of God, realised by them in the relations of their own inner life, in the actualities and appointments of the life of their own people or of humanity at large. These are, so to say, the chosen of God. They are born leaders of men. Commissioned to serve special ends affecting the life and happiness of large masses of men, they bear a charmed life. They may be hit, but can not be hurt. They may be struck, but are never stricken. Their towering optimism, and the Grace of God, turn every evil into good, every opposition into help, every loss into a gain. By the general verdict of his countrymen, Aravinda stands today among these favoured sons of God.

Birth is not an accident. "Accident of birth"—is the language of infidel empiricism. Nature has no room for acci-

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

dents in her schemes. It is only man's inability to trace her secrets that has coined this word to cover his ignorance. Man's birth is no more an accident than the rise and fall of tides. There can really be no accidents in evolution; the law of natural selection has killed their chance altogether. But does the operation of natural selection start only after the birth of the organism or does it precede it? Is it only a biological, or also a psychological law? Like the problems of biology, those of psychology also are inexplicable, except on this theory. The inference is irresistible that there is such a thing as natural selection even on the psychic plane. The spirit, by the impulse of its own needs must choose and order the conditions of its life even as the physical organism does.

This is the psychic significance of heredity. Life from this point of view is not a lottery, but a matter really of determined choice. The needs of the organism supply the organs in the lower kingdom: the desires of the heart collect and create necessary equipment and environment for the human being. On no other hypothesis can the riddle of the human life be explained more satisfactorily. It may not explain everything, but it explains many things absolutely ununderstandable and inexplicable on any other hypothesis. This at least has been the Hindu view from time immemorial. A crude intuition at first, it become a settled conviction with the people subsequently, with a fundamental philosophy of causation behind it. And this theory stands curiously verified in Aravinda Ghose.

Two strong currents of thoughts, ideals and aspirations met together and strove for supremacy in Bengal, among the generation to which Aravinda's parents belonged. One was a current of Hindu Nationalism—of the revived life, culture and ideals of the nation that had lain dormant for centuries and had been discarded as lower and primitive by the first batch of English-educated Hindus, specially in Bengal. The other was the current of Indo-Anglicism—the onrushing life, culture and ideals of the foreign rulers of the land, which, expressing themselves through British law and administration on the one side, and the new schools and universities on the

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

other, threatened to swamp and drown the original culture and character of the people. The two stocks from which Aravinda sprang represented these two conflicting forces in the country. His maternal grandfather, Raj Narayan Bose, was one of the makers of modern Bengal.

A student of David Hare, a pupil of De Rozario, an alumnus of the Hindu College, the first English college that had the support of both the Hindu community and the British rulers of the Province, Raj Narayan Bose started life as a social and religious reformer. But while he caught as fully as any one else among his contemporaries, the impulse of the new illumination, he did not lose so completely as many of them did, his hold on the fundamental spirit of the culture and civilisation of his race. He joined the Brahmo Samaj, under Maharshi Debendra Nath Tagore, but felt repelled by the denational spirit of the later developments in that movement under Keshub Chunder Sen. In fact, it is difficult to say, to which of its two leaders—Debendra Nath or Raj Narayan, the Adi or the older Brahmo-Samaj as it came to be called after Keshub Chunder Sen seceded from it and established the Brahmo Samaj of India—was more indebted for its intense and conservative nationalism. But it may be safely asserted that while Debendra Nath's nationalism had a dominating theological note, Raj Narayan's had both a theological and social, as well as a political emphasis. In him it was not merely the spirit of Hinduism that rose up in arms against the onslaught of European Christianity, but the whole spirit of Indian culture and manhood stood up to defend and assert itself against every form of undue foreign influence and alien domination. While Keshub Chunder Sen pleaded for the recognition of the truths in the Hindu scriptures side by side with those in the Bible, Raj Narayan Bose proclaimed the superiority of Hinduism to Christianity.

While Keshub Chunder was seeking to reconstruct Indian, and especially Hindu, social life, more or less after the British model, Raj Narayan's sturdy patriotism and national self-respect rebelled against the enormity, and came forward to

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

establish the superiority of Hindu social economy to the Christian social institutions and ideals. He saw the onrush of European goods into Indian markets, and tried to stem the tide by quickening what we would now call the Swadeshi spirit, long before any one else had thought of it. It was under his inspiration that a Hindu Mela or National Exhibition was started a full quarter of a century before the Indian National Congress thought of an Indian Industrial Exhibition. The founder of this Hindu Mela was also the first Bengalee who organised gymnasia for the Physical training of the youths of the nation. Stick and sword plays, and other ancient but decadent sports and pastimes of the people that have come into vogue recently, were originally revived at the Hindu Mela under Raj Narayan Bose's inspiration and instruction. Raj Narayan Bose did not openly take any part in politics, but his writings and speeches did a good deal to create that spirit of self-respect and self-assertion in the educated classes that have since found such strong expression in our recent political activities.

A strong conservatism, based upon a reasoned appreciation of the lofty spirituality of the ancient culture and civilisation of the country; a sensitive patriotism, born of a healthy and dignified pride of race; and a deep piety expressing itself through all the varied practical relations of life—these were the characteristics of the life and thought of Raj Narayan Bose. He represented the high watermark of the composite culture of his country—Vedantic, Islamic, and European. When he discoursed on Brahma-Jnan or nowledge of God, he brought to mind the ancient Hindu gnostics of the Upanishads.

When he cited verses from the Persian poets, filling the ear with their rich cadence—with his eyes melting in love and his mobile features aglow with a supreme spiritual passion—he reminded one of the old Moslem devotees. And when he spoke on the corruptions of current religion, or the soulless selfishness of modern politics, he appeared as a nineteenth century nationalist and iconoclast of Europe. In his mind and life he was at once a Hindu Maharshi, a Moslem Shafi,

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

and a Christian theist of the Unitarian type; and like Ram Mohan Roy, the founder of the Brahmo-Samaj of which Raj Narayan Bose was for many years the honoured president, he also seems to have worked out a synthesis in his own spiritual life between the three dominant world-cultures that have come face to face in modern India. Like Ram Mohan, Raj Narayan also seems to have realised himself, intellectually and spiritually, that ideal of composite nationhood in India, which the present generation has been called upon to actualise in social, economic and political relations of their country. Raj Narayan Bose was also an acknowledged leader in Bengali literature. A writer in the "Modern Review" Calcutta calls Raj Narayan Bose "the Grandfather of Indian Nationalism." He was Aravinda's maternal grandfather; and Aravinda owes not only his rich spiritual nature but even his very superior literary capacity to his inherited endowments from his mother's line.

If his maternal grandfather represented the ancient spiritual forces of his nation; Aravinda's father, Dr. Krishna Dhan Ghose, represented to a very large extent the spirit of the new illumination in his country. Dr. Ghose was essentially a product of English education and European culture. A man of exceptional parts, he finished his education in England and taking his degree in medicine, entered the medical service of the Indian Government. He was one of the most successful Civil Surgeons of his day, and, had his life been spared, he would have assuredly risen to the highest position in his service open to any native of India. Like the general body of Indian young men who came to finish their Education in England in his time, Krishna Dhan Ghose was steeped in the prevailing spirit of Anglicism. Like all of them he was a thoroughly Anglicised Bengalee, in his ways of life. But unlike many of them, underneath his foreign clothing and ways he had a genuine Hindu heart and soul. Anglicism distorts Hindu character, cripples, where it cannot kill, the inherited altruism of the man, and makes him more or less neglectful of the numerous family and social obligations under which every Hindu is born. Like the original Anglo-Saxon, his Indian imitation also lives first and foremost for himself,

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

his wife and children; and though he may recognise the claims of his relations to his charity, he scarcely places purse at their service as an obligation. But Krishna Dhan Ghose was an exception. Though he affected the European ways of living, he never neglected the social obligation of the Hindu. His purse was always open for his needy relations.

The poor of the town, where he served and lived, had in him a true friend and a ready help. In fact, his regard for the poor frequently led him to sacrifice to their present needs the future prospects of his own family and children. He had his sons educated in England; and so great was his admiration for English life and English culture that he sent them out there even before they had received any schooling in their country. But his charities met such constant and heavy inroads into his tolerably large income that he could not always keep his own children living in England provided with sufficient funds for their board and schooling. Sons of comparatively rich parents, they were brought up almost in abject poverty in a friendless country where wealth counts so much, not only physically but also intellectually and morally. Keen of intellect, tender of heart, impulsive and generous almost to recklessness regardless of his own ones, but sensitive to the sufferings of others—this was the inventory of the character of Dr. Krishna Dhan Ghose. The rich blamed him for his recklessness, the man of the world condemned him for his absolute lack of prudence, the highest virtue in his estimation. But the poor, the widow and the orphan loved him for his selfless pity, and his soulful benevolence.

When death overtook him in the very prime of life there was desolation in many a poor home in his district. It not only left his own children in absolute poverty, but destroyed the source of ready relief to many helpless families among his relations and neighbours. His quick intellectual perception, his large sympathies, his selflessness, characterised by an almost absolute lack of what the man of the world always working with an eye to the main chance, calls prudence, as a matter of personal calculation,—these are Aravinda's inheri-

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

tance in his father's line.

As a boy, Aravinda received his early education in a public school in England. The old Head Master of this school is reported to have said, when Aravinda's name came prominently before the British public in connection with the state trial of which he was made a principal accused, this time last year, that of all the boys who passed through his hands during the last twenty-five or thirty years, Aravinda was by far and above the most richly endowed in intellectual capacity. From this school he went to Cambridge, where he distinguished himself as a student of European classics, and passed the Indian Civil Service examination with great credit. Failing, however, to stand the required test of horsemanship, he was not allowed to enter the covenanted service of the Indian Government. But returning to India, he found employment in the native State of Baroda, where his endowments and scholarship soon attracted the notice of authorities, leading to his appointment to the post of Vice-Principal of the State College. Had Aravinda cared for earthly honours or wealth, he had a very splendid opening for both in Baroda. He was held in great respect by the Maharaja. He was loved by the educated classes in the State. He was exceedingly popular with the general public. All these opened very large possibilities of preferment before him in the service of the premier Native State in India.

But there was a new awakening in the country. A new school of thought had arisen, demanding a thorough reconsideration of the old and popular political, economic, and educational ideas and ideals of the people. It abjured the old mendicant methods of prayer, protest and petition. It proclaimed a new gospel of self-help and self-reliance. It called out to the spirit of India to come to its own, to stand upon its own inner strength, and to put forth its native efforts for the realisation of its true native life. It called aloud for leaders and workers—for the poet, the prophet, the philosopher, the statesman, the organiser and the man of action, to help the sacred cause. It laid on all who would accept the call the heaviest self-sacrifice yet demanded of any public man in modern

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

India. It wanted men who would not only, as hitherto, give to their country their leisure moments and their idle pennies, but who would consecrate all their working hours and their hard earnings to the service of the Motherland. The call went to the heart of Aravinda. His own native Province called for him. It laid on him the vow of poverty. It offered him the yoke of the saviours of their people and the uplifters of humanity—the yoke of calumny, persecution, imprisonment and exile. Aravinda obeyed the Mother's call, accepted her stern conditions, and cheerfully took up her chastening yoke. He give up his place in Baroda; worth £560 a year, to take up the duties of Principal in the College started at Calcutta under the new National Council of Education at a bare subsistence allowance of £10 a month.

This movement of national education owed its origin to the latest education-policy of the Indian Government, who sought to turn the institutions of public instruction in the country to distinctly political ends. The old education had given birth to wide-spread disaffection. It called into being "the discontented B.A.S". The new educational policy initiated by Lord Curzon was directed towards curing this evil. Its aim was to manufacture loyal citizens—men who would be eternally content to remain loyal to the autocratic government in their country, without any desire for free citizenship. The movement of National Education was the people's reply to this official policy. It took definite shape and form as a result of the persecution of schoolboys, by the Executive in Bengal, for their paarticipation in the new political movements in the country. But it had a pure fundamental need. The officially-controlled education had been condemned by both friends and foes alike. It was shallow and rootless.

It imparted the shadow, but not the substance, of modern culture to the youths of the nation. It was artificial, because foreign in both spirit and form. It led to a fearful waste of youthful time and energy by imposing the necessity of learning a foreign language, to receive instructions through its medium in all higher branches of study. It was controlled by an alien

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Bureaucracy, in the interest, mainly, of their own political position, and only secondarily in those of real intellectual life of the pupils. It was excessively literary, and detrimental to the industrial and economical life of the country. The movement of National Education was started to counteract these evils of the officially controlled system of public instruction. It proposed to promote—"Education, scientific literary, and technical, on national lines and under national control." But though owing its initiation to the threats of the Government to close the doors of the official schools, colleges and universities against those who would take any part—even to the extent of simply attending—in any political meeting or demonstration—the National Education Movement in Bengal sought to avoid all open cause of friction with the authorities, and professed to work independent of but not in opposition to the Government. Political in its origin, it tried to avoid all conflicts with the authorities by assuming an obsolutely non-political attitude.

The school of thought to which Aravinda belonged did not support this declaration of the National Council of Education an could not appreciate this needless dread, as they thought, of offending official susceptibilities. But they had to accept the verdict of the majority. One of the most unfortunate things in modern public life is the dependence of all large public movements on the help and support of the wealthy classes in the community. Large and organised movements in our time cannot be carried on without large and substantial financial support; and the rich are not willing, as they were in the primitive times, to lend their support to any institution without seeking to control it. This unfortuate condition lowers the intellectual and moral tone of many a public institution which though financed with the monies of the richer classes, would have been able without their personal intervention or control, or keep up a very superior intellectual or moral standard. This is particularly injurious in comparatively primitive communities, where realised wealth has not yet had time to ally itself with high culture, and where, owing to the absence of a vigorous and free national life, it has but

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

little incentive and lesser opportunity for cultivating such an alliance.

The Nationalists are a poor party in India, and the National Council of Education, though it owed its initiation to their efforts passed, almost from the very beginning, beyond their sphere of influence, and Aravinda's position as the nominal head of the National College, practically controlled by men of different views and opinions, became almost from the very beginning more or less anomalous.

This was, from some point of view, very unfortunate. Aravinda had received the best modern education that any man of his country and generation could expect to have. He had for some years been a teacher of youth in Baroda, and had acquired considerable practical experience in his art. He had clearly realised the spirit and actualities of the life of his nation, and knew how the most advanced principles of modern pedagogy could be successfully worked into a thoroughly national system of education in India. He went to Calcutta as an educationist. He knew that the foundations of national independence and national greatness must be laid in a strong and advanced system of national education. He had a political ideal, no doubt; but politics meant of him much more than is ordinarily understood by the term. It was not a game of expediency; but a school far developing human character. Education could no more be divorced from politics than it could be divorced from religion or morals.

Any system of education that helps such isolation and division between the various organic relations of life, is mediaval, and not modern. It is the educatian of the cloister—abstract and unreal: not the education of the modern man, eager to realise his fullest manhood in and through every relation of life. Aravinda is an apostle of modern education. Indeed, his ideal of modern education is even higher than what is understood by modern education ordinarily in Europe. It is a supremely spiritual ideal. Its aim is to actualise the highest and deepest God-consciousness of the human soul, in the outer life and appointments of human society.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

tional work in Calcutta. His place in the National College

It was a temptation of having an open field for the realisation of this lofty educational ideal which brought Aravinda to Calcutta. Had he been given a free hand in the new National College there, that institution would have opened an altogether new chapter not only in the history of modern education in India, but perhaps in the whole world. To work the realism of the spirit of modern culture into the mould of the idealism of ancient philosophy, would not only secure for India her lost position as teacher of humanity, but would, perchance, even save modern civilisation from total collapse and destruction under the pressure of a gross and greedy industrialism.

But, unfortunately, neither individuals nor communities can easily break away from their own past. Most of the members of the new National Council of Education in Bengal were products of the old university. Some of the leading men of the new organisation had been closely associated, for many years, with the actual working out of the old vicious system. Steeped in the traditions of this old education, they could hardly be expected to thoroughly enter into the spirit of modern pedagogy. They were willing to give fair room to the new principles, as an experiment, but could hardly give them their absolute and whole-hearted support as truths. It seemed to them like jumping into the unknown. While accepting the principle of national education as education on national lines and under national control, and consequently, pledged not to accept any official aid they were not free from the fear of possible official opposition, which, if once aroused, would make their work, they thought, absolutely impossible. They had a real dread of the Bureaucracy, and no strong confidence, really, in their own people. The dominating and declared ideal of the new Council, consequently, came to be not in any way to supplant, but only to supplement, the existing Government-and-University-system of education in the country.

A timid, temporizing spirit, so galling to the reformer and the man with new visions and large ideas, generally guided the work of the National Council, and it made it almost impossible for Aravinda to throw himself heart and soul into his educa-

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

though he was its nominal Principal, was not really that of an organiser and initiator, but simply of a teacher of language and history, even as it had been in the Maharaja's College at Baroda. He had left Baroda in the hope of finding a wider scope of beneficent and patriotic activity in the new College in Calcutta. That hope was not realised. Almost from the very beginning he saw the hopelessness of working out a truly modern and thoroughly national system of education, through the organisation at whose service he had so enthusiastically placed himself.

But the man possessed by pure passion, creates, where he cannot find them ready-made for him, his own instruments for the realisation of his supreme end in life. And wider fields of public usefulness were soon opened before Aravinda. The National School was without a daily English Organ. A new paper was started. Aravinda was started. to join its staff. A joint-stock company was shortly floated to run it, and Aravinda became one of the directors. This paper "Bande Mataram"—at once secured for itself a recognised position in Indian journalism. The hand of the master was in it, from the very beginning. Its bold attitude, vigorous thinking, its clear ideas, its chaste and powerful diction, its scorching sarcasm and refined witticism, were unsurpassed by any journal in the country, either Indian or Anglo-Indian. It at once raised the tone of every Bengali paper, and compelled the administration of even hostile Anglo-Indian editors. Morning after morning not only Calcutta but the educated community almost in every part of the country, eagerly awaited its vigorous pronouncements on the stirring questions of the day. It even forced itself upon the notice of the callous and self-centered British press. Long extracts from it commenced to be reproduced week after week even in the exclusive columns of the "Times" in London. It was a force in the country which none dared to ignore, however much they might fear or hate it, and Aravinda was the leading spirit, the central figure, in the new journal. The opportunities that were denied him in the National College he found in the pages of the "Bande Mataram," and from a tutor of a few youths he thus became the teacher of a whole nation.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

2

In England

(Brief notes on the main items of the correspondence are given below followed by the correspondence itself. The numbers of the notes correspond to the numbers of the items of the correspondence.)

I

Letter dated 24th August, 1892

(From Mr. Lockhart, Secretary to the Civil Service Commissioners to the Under Secretary of State, India Office.)

It reports that "Messers. MacIver and A. A. Ghose have still to satisfy the Commissioners of their eligibility in respect of health and the latter gentleman has still to pass in Riding."

II

Latter dated 4th November, 1892

(From Mr. E.A. Collier, Senior Officer of the C.S. Commission to Mr. Trevor, Asst. Secretary, Judicial and Public Dept. India Office.)

It a private note stating that Sri Aurobindo "has passed his medical examination and we expect to hear the result of his riding examination soon."

So, till 4th November, there is no sign that he would be

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

rejected.

III

Letter dated 14th November, 1892

(From Mr. E.A. Collier to Mr. Trevor).

It says : "Mr. Ghose has given us a good deal of trouble and there are some points in his case as to which I must ask my colleague Howlett who is away now but will be here to-morrow."

So, between 4th November and 14th November, something nappened which made Mr. Collier change his mind. It is also evident that Mr. Trevor was trying to get Sri Aurobindo selected.

IV

Letter dated 16th November, 1892

(Memorandum by the Senior Examiner, Civil Service Commission, regarding the case of Mr. Aravinda A. Ghose.)

It states the following points :

(a) Ordered to be examined on 9th August.

Did not attend. Sent medical certificate on August II.

(b) On 15th August was asked when he would be ready to be examined.

No reply.

Question repeated on 30th August.

Question repeated a third time on 17th October.

(c) Answer dated 18th October—stating he would prefer 25th or 26th October. "Colonel Brough fixed 26th October at 12.30." "Ghose ordered by letter on 22nd October to attend at that time."

(d) "On 26th October, Colonel Brough wrote to say the candidate had not appeared. A messenger was sent to Chose (same address) and asked to bring back an answer ; Answer

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

was that Ghose had not received the letter making appointment."

(e) Directed to attend here in person on Monday 31st October. "I gave him a letter asking him to present the letter in person."

On the 5th November, Colonel Brough wrote saying "Ghose had never appeared." Brough added—"he would prefer not to examine Ghose."

(f) Colonel Brough, however, agreed to examine him "if some one from this office were present". (9th Nov.)

Ghose ordered to call here at noon on the 10th. He came at ten minutes to one.

"I then showed Ghose Colonel Brough's latest letter fixing the 15th Nov. for the Examination and naming the train 2.22 from Charing Cross. Told him to meet me at 2.15 on the platform at Charing Cross."

"I went there yesterday (15th Nov.)—but no Ghose appeared. I went to Woolwich—He was not there."

"While waiting at Charing Cross I had sent a message to Mr. Bonar asking him to send a messenger round to his house to enquire. The messenger brought word that Ghose was out and was not expected till 6 P.M."

It is clear that he could have appeared on (1) 9th August, (2) 26t October, (3) 5th November, (4) 15th November. That he did not do so is a fact and it conclusively proves that he did not want to appear for the Riding Test.

The question may be asked : "Why did he not want to appear, specially when he had passed the Examination in writing?"

There are several possible answers : he told us in his evening talks during his early years at Pondicherry that he did not want to join the I.C.S. and yet he did not like to tell his father about it. So he managed to get rejected.

Of course, he was hard up for money and prepared the

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

I.C.S. course without a tutor. He could not afford the expenses of very frequent riding lessons.

His advocacy of Indian political freedom in the Majlis at Cambridge was not the unripe eloquence of a raw undergraduate. It was something that came from a deep conviction from his soul. That this was so is amply borne out by the fact of his plunge into Indian politics immediately on his return to India. He wrote that famous series of articles "New Lamps for Old" in the Induprakash in 1893.

That the final rejection of Mr. Cotton's offer (see VIII) and his own memorial (see XI) was influenced by Lord Kimberly's "obiter dictum" (see XIX) which may have been formed by the reports from the Cambridge Majlis in which a future civil servant was represented as ventilating revolutionary views about Indian freedom, seems quite evident.

V

Letter dated 17th November, 1892

(From the Civil Service Commission to the Under Secretary of State, India Office.)

This conveys to the Sec. of State the C.S. Commissioners' rejection of Sri Aurobindo. It says : "although several opportunities have been offered to Mr. A.A. Ghose of attending for examination in Riding . . . he has repeatedly failed to attend at the time appointed." Therefore they are "unable to certify that he is qualified to be appointed to the Civil Service of India."

VI

Minute dated 18th November, 1892

(This is a minute on the C.S. Commissioners' letter prepared in the office of the Sec. of State for circulation "for information" to the Under Secretary, the Secretary of State and to the Committee.)

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

We get from it the following : "Mr. Ghose obtained the 11th place at the open competition of 1890, was No. 23 in the First Periodical Examination, No. 19 in the Second Periodical and No. 37 in the final last August."

VIII and IX

Letter dated 19th November, 1892

(From Mr. James S. Cotton to Sir Arthur Macpherson, Secretary, Judicial and Public Dept. India Office.)

Letter dated 20th November, 1892

(From Mr. G.M. Porthero to Mr. J.S. Cotton and sent by him to the C.S. Commissioners.)

It is when the rejection seemed final that two Englishmen—Mr. Cotton and Mr. Prothero took up Sri Aurobindo's cause. The reader will find the gloom of red-tape relieved by the gust of sympathy and warm-hearted support of these two gentlemen who represent the real culture of England.

Mr. James S. Cotton of the Kensington Liberal Club was one of the editors of the "Academy". He was born in India at Coonor and was brother of Sir Henry Cotton, I.C.S., who took a prominent part in starting the Indian National Congress in those early days.

Mr. G.M. Prothero was Senior Tutor at Cambridge. He later became Sir and a prominent historian. This testimony coming as it does unsolicited from a University man throws a unique light on Sri Aurobindo as a student at Cambridge. The tribute paid by Mr. Prothero to Sri Aurobindo not only as an intellectual but as a man of character is highly significant.

I sent a copy of this letter to King's College, Cambridge and was glad to find that it was placed there along with other references to Sri Aurobindo.

These letters require no comment as they speak for themselves.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

XI

Letter dated 21st November, 1892

(This is a memorial from Sri Aurobindo to the Earl of Kimberley, the Secretary of State for India)

It is evident that Sri Aurobindo wrote this unwillingly owing to his elder brother Binoy Bhushan's persuation and also to the moral pressure of Mr. James S. Cotton. Mr. Cotton writes in his letter : "I have therefore instructed him to present a petition without delay to Lord Kimberley."

There is an autobiographical note of deep pathos relating to his financial condition during those years, in this memorial :

"I was sent over to England when seven years of age, with my two elder brothers, and for the last eight years we have been thrown on our own resources without any English friend to help or advise us. Our father, Dr. K.D. Ghose of Khulna, has been unable to provide the three of us with sufficient for the most necessary wants and we have long been in an embarrassed position."

This is a positive proof that Sri Aurobindo had drunk deep the bitter cup of poverty from his childhood. No silver-spoon feeding for him. And immediately on his return to his homeland it was Mother India that claimed him.

XII—XIII—XIV

Minute dated 21st November, 1892

(This is a Minute of the office of the Secretary of State on Mr. A.A. Ghose's letter).

Based on this Minute, a reply to the Civil Service Commissioners is drafted on the 25th November, 1892, with corrections, atterations and additions, transmitting Sri Aurobindo's memorial to the C.S. Commissioners. It shifts the responsibility to the Indian Civil Service Commissioner from the Secretary of State for India.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

A draft of a reply sent to Sri Aurobindo on the 26th November also accompanies this Minute.

XVI

Minute dated 30th November, 1892

(This is a Minute on the Civil Service Commissioners' letter prepared in the office of the Secretary of State for India.)

It contains the views of the members of the Committee of the Secretary of State for India.

XVII

Letter dated 29th November, 1892

(From the Civil Service Commission to the Under Secretary of State, India Office.)

This conveys to the Secretary of State the final rejection by the Civil Service Commission of the memorial sent by Sri Aurobindo on the 21st November and returns the memorial to the Secretary of State.

XVIII-XIX

Minutes dated 1st and 2nd December, 1892

(Minutes of Mr. G.W.E. Russell, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for India and Lord Kimberley.)

The Secretary of State throws the responsibility of deciding Sri Aurobindo's case on the Civil Service Commission. The note by Mr. Russell, dated 1 December, 1892, recommends Sri Aurobindo's case for reconsideration. He says : "I should like the candidate another chance of qualifying. The Commissioners are not very emphatic against it. They only say they are not themselves disposed to grant it. They might be perfectly willing to grant it on a hint from you." Mr. Russell could not press Sri Aurobindo's case to Lord Kimberley in a more emphatic way. He says : "The candidate

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

seems to me a remarkably deserving man and I can quite believe that poverty was the cause of his failure to appear."

But Lord Kimberley's mind was already made up. He says : "I am sorry that I cannot take a compassionate view as Mr. Russell suggests of the case." And he even goes out of his way to add an "obiter dictum": "I must add however as an obiter dictum that I should much doubt whether Mr. Ghose would be a desirable addition to the Service."

Lord Kimberley seems to have been particularly piqued by Mr. Prothero's strongly-worded letter.

It is also evident that Mr. Russell's pleading must have been the result of Mr. James Cotton's strong influence.

XX

Letters dated 7th December, 1892

(From the Secretary of State's Office to Mr. A.A. Ghose.)

This is the final rejection by the Secretary of State for India.

It may be added that there were cases in which candidates who had not passed the Riding Test were nominated to the I.C.S. in India and passed their Riding Examination while serving in India. That course was open to the C.S. Commissioners and to the Secretary of State for India.

XXII

Letter dated 12th December, 1892

(This is another memorial from Sri Aurobindo to the Secretary of State.)

It prays for the payment of £150 due to be paid to him as a probationer for the I.C.S.

Evidently, James S. Cotton and Binoy Bhushan had pressed him to pray. Though, in fact, it was a legitimate claim, he himself was not inclined to make such a petition.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

XXIII

Minute dated 12th December, 1892

(This is minute on Mr. A.A. Ghose's letter prepared in the office of the Secretary of State.)

The memorial was circulated and the opinion was in favour of giving £150.

Here is the first mention of the Service at Baroda :

("N.B. Mr. J.S. Cotton informs me that he has grounds for hoping that Mr. Ghose will obtain at once an appointment in the Service for the Gaekwar of Baroda.")

The minute states :

"As this is the first case of a candidate rejected after passing his Periodical and final examination on account of failing to pass his Riding Examination, it is submitted that the allowance of £150 be paid to Mr. A.A. Ghose on the ground that candidates who in past years have lost their appointment through not qualifying in passing the medical examination have been allowed to receive the sums due on passing the Final Examination."

The payment was authorised and paid on the 22nd December, 1892.

THE CORRESPONDENCE

I

J & P
1345
1892 24th August 1892

Sir,

I am directed by the Civil Service Commissioners to transmit herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State for India in Council, a list containing the names of the candidates selected for the Civil Service of India in 1890, who

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

have shown a competent knowledge of the subjects prescribed for the Final Examination, together with a statement of the Prizes awarded upon the results of that examination.

Of these candidates, Messers MacIver and A.A. Ghose have still to satisfy the Commissioners of their eligibility in respect of health and the latter gentleman has still to pass in Riding.

The remaining candidates, Messers Thomas and Laurie, have failed to pass the Final Examination.

I am at the same time to forward the University certificates which have been sent in by these candidates, with the exception of Messers A.A. Ghose and M. Ghose.

RECEIVED
I
INDIA OFFICE
25 AUG. 92

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your obedient Servant,
B. Lockhart

The Under Secretary of State
India Office

II

J & P 1897/92

4 Nov. 1892

My dear Trever

I think Mr. Ghose's case will be settled very shortly. He has passed his medical Examination and we expect to hear the result of his riding Examination soon.

All the other points seem to be disposed of.

I am
Very truly yours
E.A. Collier

P.S. You have doubtless seen in the papers that a vacancy has arisen among the (?) men by the drowning of poor young Littlewood in the Roumania disaster.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

III

J & P 1897/92

14 Nov. 1892

My dear Trevor

Mr. Ghose has given us a good deal of trouble and there are some points in his case as to which I must ask my colleague Howlett who is away now, but will be here tomorrow.

Meanwhile I may mention that the Riding Examination is fixed for tomorrow.

I will write again as soon as I can add anything to the foregoing.

Very truly yours
E.A. Collier

IV

J & P
1966

In the reply to this Letter
please quote+

1892
Civil Service Commission,
Westminster.
Case of Mr. Aravinda A. Ghose

Memorandum by the Senior Examiner, Civil Service Commission respecting the Examination in Riding.

Ordered to be examined with the other probationers on August 9th. Did not attend. Sent medical certificate on August 11th to explain why. Was asked on 15th August to say when he would be ready to be examined. Question repeated on 30th August, as no answer had been received. Question repeated a third time on 17th October, answer requested by return of post. Answer received dated 18th October saying he would prefer the following Tuesday or Wednesday. Colonel Brough fixed the Wednesday (October 26th) at 12.30 at Woolwich. Ghose was ordered by letter on 22nd to attend at that time : the letter was sent to same address as that of 17th October. On

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

26th October, Colonel Brough wrote to say the candidate had not appeared. A messenger was sent to Ghose (same address) and asked to bring back an answer : the answer was that Ghose had not received the letter making the appointment. Ghose was directed to attend here in person on Monday 31st October at 12 noon. He came at 12.40 and repeated his statement that the letter abovementioned had never reached him. I gave him a letter to Colonel Brough asking the latter to arrange with Ghose a date for his Examination and told Ghose to lose no time in going down to Woolwhich and presenting the letter in person : to go down that afternoon if he had no other engagement. I also wrote a line to Colonel Brough telling him of this. Colonel Brough wrote on 5th November saying Ghose had never appeared, and returning the Marking Form supplied for his report. Colonel Brough added that oe would prefer not to examine Ghose. After a note from me, he agreed however, to do so, if some one from this Office were present (Nov. 9th). Ghose ordered to call here at noon on the 10th. He came at ten minutes to one. He explained (as also in his letter of the 9th instant received on 10th) that he had twice been to see Colonel Brough but had not found him. I asked him whether he went to the Office of the Riding Establishment. He said "No—to Colonel's house" (this is close by). He posted the letter I gave him, to Colonel Brough, instead of leaving it for him. Colonel Brough has returned this letter to me, together with Ghose's undated letter accompanying it. I then showed Ghose Colonel Brough's latest letter fixing the 15th November for the Examination, and naming the train 2.22 from Charing Cross I also copied this on a slip of paper, which I gave into Ghose's hand, and told him to meet me, without fail, at 2.15 on the platform at Charing Cross Station. I explained to him that if he again failed us, the Commissioners would not be able to give another chance, as this state of things could not be allowed to continue. He took away the memorandum and also promised verbally to meet me on the following Tuesday the 15th November. I went there yesterday and kept a look-out, but no Ghose appeared. I went on to Woolwich by the 2.22 train, in case Ghose should be going from any other station or by a different train. But he

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

was not at the Riding Establishment. Colonel Brough and I waited from 20 minutes to half an hour, and then I returned. While waiting at Charing Cross station, I had sent a message to Mr. Bonar, saying the candidate had not yet appeared and asking him to send a messenger round to his house to enquire. Mr. Bonar did this, sending also a note to ask Ghose to go down to Woolwich and be examined. The messenger brought word that Ghose was out and was not expected till 6 p.m.

Colonel Brough's servant says no one called as Ghose had asserted : he would have noticed an Indian gentleman—none such had appeared at Colonel Brough's house on any of the days named.

16th November, 1892

V

Letter should be addressed—
"The Secretary,
"Civil Service Commission,
"London, "(S.W.)"

J & P
1897
1892

With J & P. 1926/92

Civil Service Commission,
17th November 1892.

1345/92

Sir,

With reference to Mr. Lockhart's letter of the 24th August last.

I am directed by the Civil Service Commissioners to acquaint you for the information of the Secretary of State for India in Council, that although several opportunities have been offered to Mr. A.A. Ghose of attending for examination in Riding, with a view to proving himself qualified in that respect, he has repeatedly failed to attend at the time appointed, and that the Commissioners are consequently unable to certify that he is qualified to be appointed to the Civil Service of India.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your obedient Servant,
John Hennell

The Under Secretary of State,
India Office,

Received
I
India Office, 18 Nov. 92

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

VI

With J&P 1926/92

Minute Paper J&P

Public Department.

Letter from C.S. Commissioners

Dated 17. Nov. 1892.
Received 18 . . .

	Date	Initials.	Subject
Under Secretary . . .	18th Nov.	F.T.	
Secretary of State . . .	18	A.G. K	Civil Service of India : rejection of Mr. A.A. Ghose Selected in 1890
Committee . . .	19		
Under Secretary . .			
Secretary of State . . .			
Council . . .			

Minute

In August last the C.S. Commissioners reported that Mr. Ghose, a native of India and allotted to the Lower Provinces of Bengal and Assam, who had passed his Final Examination, had still to satisfy the Commission in respect of Health and Riding. He has passed the medical examination (see note of 4th Nov.) and the commissioners now report that they are unable to certify that he is qualified to be appointed to the Civil Service of India because he has repeatedly failed to attend several opportunities offered to him of attending the Riding Examination. In all probability Mr. Ghose will address the Secretary of State. His case can then be considered if necessary. He did not furnish any University Certificate on the last occasion and consequently has not received the allowance of £150 payable after the Final Examination. He was an undergraduate of King's College, Cambridge and that College, if applied to, might state why the certificate was not granted. Mr. Ghose obtained the 11th place at the Open Competition of 1890—was No. 23 in the First Periodical Examination—No. 19 in the Second Periodical and No. 37 in the Final last August.

Circulated for information.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

VII

J & P. 1897
1892

Yes
A.G.
17 Nov. 92

17th Nov. 92

My dear Trevor

Mr. Ghose will be rejected. The official letter may reach you tomorrow, but as Friday is mail day you may like to act on this information.

I am very truly yours
E. A. Collier

F. Trevor Esq.

VIII

Nov. 19/92
W
With J & P
1926/92

107 Abingdon Road
Kensington

Dear Sir Arthur

Though I have not the pleasure of your acquaintance, I venture to think that my name may be known to you through Mr. Whitley Stokes, or through my brother in the Bengal Secretariat.

My present object in addressing you is to endeavour to arouse your good will on behalf of Mr. A.A. Ghose, who has been rejected by the Civil Service Commissioner as a probationary candidate for the Indian Civil Service. I went this morning to the office of the Commission, where I was confidentially informed of the circumstances of the case (which did not materially differ from the story he had already told me), and was also informed that his only possible hope lay in an appeal to the Secretary of State.

I have therefore instructed him to present a petition without delay to Lord Kimberley, setting out all the circumstances,

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

acknowledging the justice of his rejection, and begging that, if possible, he may be allowed yet one more chance.

As you may know, Mr. Ghose was disqualified for failing to pass his examination in riding, or perhaps I should say, for failing to keep the appointment made for him by the examiner, after he had previously shown similar want of punctuality and disregard for the requirements of the examiner.

His excuse (such as it is) is that want of money prevented him from taking the needful lessons in riding, and that, at the last, anxiety and moral cowardice made him lose his head.— He tells me that he did turn up at Woolwich for the examination, half an hour late.—

It happens that I have known Mr. A.A. Ghose and his two brothers for the past five years, and that I have been a witness of the pitiable straits to which they have all three been reduced through the failure of their father, a Civil Surgeon in Bengal and (I believe) a most respectable man, to supply them with adequate resources. In addition, they have lived an isolated life, without any Englishman to take care of them or advise them.

I could tell you a great deal more if you would care to give me a personal interview.—I must content myself now with stating that, should the Secretary of State feel himself able to give Mr. Ghose one more chance, I undertake to provide the necessary expenses of riding lessons, journeys to Woolwich etc., and further to do my best to see that his conduct to the Commissioners is regular and becoming.

I am
Yours faithfully
Jas. S. Cotton.

Sir A.G. Macpherson H.C.I.E.

IX

J & P 1966/92

King's College,
Cambridge.
20th November, 1892

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Dear Sir,

I am very sorry to hear what you tell me about Ghose, that he has been rejected in his final I.C.S. Examination for failure in riding. His conduct throughout his two years here was most exemplary. He held a foundation scholarship, which he obtained (before passing his first I.C.S. Examination) by open competition, in classics. His pecuniary circumstances prevented him form resigning this, when he became a Selected Candidate, and the regulations of the scholarship obliged him to devote a great part of his time to classics, of course to some extent to the disadvantage of his I.C.S. studies. He performed his part of the bargain, as regards the College, most honourably, and took a high place in the 1st class of the Classical Tripos at the end of the second year of his residence. He also obtained certain college prizes, showing command of English and literary ability. That a man should have been able to do this (which alone is quite enough for most undergraduates), and at the same time to keep up his I.C.S. work, proves very unusual industry and capacity. Besides his classical scholarships he possessed a knowledge of English Literature far beyond the average of undergraduates, and wrote a much better English style than most young Englishmen. That a man of this calibre should be lost to the Indian Government merely because he failed in sitting on a horse or did not keep an appointment appears to me, I confess, a piece of official short-sightedness which it would be hard to beat.

Moreover the man has not only ability but character. He has had a very hard and anxious time of it for the last two years. Supplies from home have almost entirely failed, and he has had to keep his two brothers as well as himself, and yet his courage and perseverance have never failed. I have several times written to his father on his behalf, but for the most part unsuccessfully. It is only lately that I managed to extract from him enough to pay some tradesmen who would otherwise have put his son into the Country Court. I am quite sure that these pecuniary difficulties were not due to any extravagance on Ghose's part : his whole way of life, which was simple and

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

penurious in the extreme, is against this : they were due entirely to circumstances beyond his control. But they must have hampered him in many ways, and probably prevented him from spending enough on horses to enable him to learn to ride. I can fully believe that his inability to keep his appointment at Woolwich was due to the want of cash.

In conclusion, I hope sincerely that your efforts to reinstate him as a Selected Candidate will prove successful, for I think, if he is finally turned out, it will be, however legally justifiable, a moral injustice to him, and a very real loss to the Indian Government. It may also perhaps be suggested that to reject so able a Hindoo because he cannot ride is likely to give rise to serious misunderstanding in India, and to open the door to a charge of partiality, which is of course absolutely untenable, but which might be put forward by natives with some plausibility.

Yours truly,
G.M. Prothero

X

J & P. 1966/92
Ghose

30 Nov.' 92

Dear Trevor

I return Mr. Prothero's letter.

We are going to notify to Mr. Ghose that no further facilities will be afforded to him unless indeed further communications should pass between your Board and ours tending to different result. I am rather in the dark on the point. If I can write more definitely in the course of the day I will do so.

Very truly yours
E.A. Collier

XI

One Copy for J. & P.
J. & P. 1926/1892

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

To the Right. Hon. The Earl of Kimberley
Secretary of State for India.

6 Burlington Rd.
Bayswater W.
Monday. Nov. 21. 1892

May it please your Lordship

I was selected as a probationer for the Indian Civil Service in 1890, and after the two years probation required, have been rejected on the ground that I failed to attend the Examination in Riding.

I humbly petition your Lordship that a further consideration may, if possible, be given to my case.

I admit that the Commissioners have been very indulgent to me in the matter, and that my conduct has been as would naturally lead them to suppose me negligent of their instructions; but I hope your Lordship will allow me to lay before you certain circumstances that may tend to extenuate it.

I was sent over to England, when seven years of age, with my two elder brothers and for the last eight years we have been thrown on our own resources without any English friend to help or advise us. Our father, Dr. K.D. Ghose of Khulna, has been unable to provide the three of us with sufficient for the most necessary wants, and we have long been in an embarrassed position.

It was owing to want of money that I was unable always to report cases in London at the times required by the Commissioners, and to supply myself with sufficiently constant practice in Riding. At the last I was thrown wholly on borrowed resources and even these were exhausted.

It was owing to difficulty in procuring the necessary money, that I was late at my appointment on Tuesday Nov. 15. I admit that I did not observe the exact terms of the appointment; however I went on to Woolwich by the next train, but found that the Examiner had gone back to London.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

If your Lordship should grant me another chance, an English gentleman, Mr. Cotton, (editor of the Academy) of 107 Abingdon Road, Kensington. W. has undertaken that want of money shall not prevent me from fulfilling the exact instructions of the Commissioners.

If your Lordship should obtain this for me, it will be the object of my life to remember it in the faithful performance of my duties in the Civil Service of India.

I am
Your Lordship's obedient servant
Aravinda. Acroyd. Ghose

XII

Minute Paper. J. & P. 1926/1892 Public Department.

Letter from Mr. A.A. Ghose Dated 21. Nov. 1892
Received 23 . . .

	Date Initials	Subject
Under Secretary . . .	24 Nov F.T.	Civil Service of India :
Secretary of State		
Committee		Case of Mr. A. A. Ghose.
Under Secretary		
Secretary of State		
Council		

Sign A.G.
24 Nov. 92

Minute
See J. & P. 1897/92 annexed.

Mr. Ghose has now appealed to the Secretary of State to give him another chance for passing his Riding Examination and Mr. James Sutherland Cotton, to whom Mr. Ghose refers, has written the annexed letter to Sir Arthur Macpherson. Poverty apparently has been a great misfortune to Mr. Ghose. Unless the C.S. Commissioners certificate Mr. Ghose as qualified for the I.C.S. the Sec. of State cannot appoint him to the Service. But in the circumstances it is submitted

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

that a copy of Mr. Ghose's memorial should be sent for the consideration of the Commissioners. It should not be forgotten that Mr. Ghose has passed all his examinations and that no selected candidate has yet been rejected on account of the Riding Examination. It may be well to enquire of Mr. William Chawner, Emmanuel Coll, Cambridge, (who in June last succeeded Sir Roland Wilson as Sec. to the Board of Indian Civil Service Studies at Cambridge) how Mr. Ghose conducted himself at the University previous to his Final Examination. This suggestion is made because Mr. Ghose has not produced the necessary University Certificate and consequently has not received the allowance of £ 150.

XIII

J. & P. I.O.
1926/92
232 25 Nov. 1892

Sir,

With reference to Mr. Hennell's letter of the 17th instant, I am directed etc. to transmit for the consideration of the C.S. Commissioners a Memorial from Mr. A.A. Ghose which should have been addressed to the Commissioners in asmuch as the decision of the matter to which it refers rests with them.

Horace Walpole
The Secretary
Civil Service Commission.

XIV

J. & P.
1926/1892
Draft for
Mr. Godley's signature I.O.
233 26 Nov. 1892

Sir,

I am directed by the Earl of Kimberley to acknowledge the receipt of your Memorial of the 21st inst. and, in reply, to inform you that it has been transmitted to the Civil Service Commissioners whose duty it is to decide upon the matter to which it relates.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

A.A. Ghose Esq.
6, Burlington Road,
Bayswater.
W.

(Sd) Horace Walpole

XV

Done F.T.
25/11
Mr. Trevor

Please send this letter privately to the C.S. Commission.

An official letter should go to Mr. Ghose telling him that the decision rests with the C.S. Commission to whom his memorial has accordingly been forwarded.

A.G.
25 Nov. 92

Mr. Godley,

Mr. J.S. Cotton called on me this morning and left the enclosed letter to him from Mr. Ghose's tutor at King's College Cambridge. He asked me to give it to you. Mr. Cotton says that Ghose will be ready (if the C.S. Commission will consent) to attend the Riding Examination in a very short time.

F. Trevor
25/11/92

XVI

Minute Paper. J & P 1966/1892 Public Department.

Letter from C.S. Commissioner Dated 29 Nov. 1892
Received 30 . . .

	Date. Initials.	Subject.
Under Secretary . . .	30 Nov. F.T.	
Secretary of State . . .	30 A.G.	
Committee . . .	Civil Service of India :	
Under Secretary		
Secretary of State		
Council		Case of Mr. A.A. Ghose
Sign letters A.G. 5 Dec. 92	I agree proceed accordingly K Dec. 5	

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Lord Kimberley,

I do not think that it would be at all advisable to attempt to interfere with the discretion of the Civil Service Commission in the matter of this certificate. It is for them to award it or refuse it, and I am unable to see why the Sec. of State should assume any responsibility. The impression which Mr. Ghose has made on the minds of the Commission is by no means a favourable one, and I think that a perusal ofthe memorandum by the Senior Examiner tends to confirm their view of his character. I would inform Mr. Ghose that his memorial has been forwarded to the C.S. Commission : that they decline to comply with his request : and that in the absence of the statutory certificate from them the S. of S. is unable to appoint him to the Service.

A.G.
30 Nov. 92 1892

Minute

See J & P 1897 & 1926

For the reasons stated in the accompanying Memorandum the Civil Service Commissioners are not disposed to afford Mr. Ghose further facilities for undergoing the Examination in Riding. This is very unfortunate considering Mr. Ghose's career at Cambridge where he secured a first class in the classical tripos. See Mr. Prothero's letter to Mr. Cotton which was sent to the C.S. Commissioners for information. As the Commissioners have returned to this office Mr. Ghose's memorial, it is presumed that the Secretary of State will now inform that gentleman that, in the absence of the Statutory Certificate, he cannot interfere, unless he is disposed to ask the Commissioners as a matter of grace to give Mr. Ghose a further chance.

Orders are solicited.

XVII

J & P
1966/1892
In the reply to this Letter
please quote—

Civil Service Commission,
Westminster.
29th November, 1892

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Sir,

I am directed by the Civil Service Commissioners to acknowledge the receipt of your letter (J & P 1926) of the 25th instant, transmitting for their consideration a Memorial from Mr. A.A. Ghose, and in reply, I am to acquaint you, for the information of the Secretary of State for India in Council, that in view of the circumstances stated in the accompanying Memorandum, which was submitted to them by their Senior Examiner before they arrived at the decision communicated to you by Mr. Hennell's letter of the 17th November, they are not themselves disposed to afford Mr. Ghose further facilities for undergoing the Examination in Riding.

Mr. Ghoe's Memorial is herewith returned.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your obedient servant,
John Hennell

The Under Secretary of State
India Office
Received
I
India Office
30 Nov. 92

XVIII

Lord Kimberley,

You know that I fully share your views as to the importance of Riding. In this case, I should give the candidate another chance of qualifying. The Commissioners are not very emphatic against it. They only say that "they are not themselves disposed" to grant it.

They might be perfectly willing to grant it on a hint from you.

The candidate seems to me a remarkably deserving man, and I can quite believe that poverty was the cause of his failures to appear.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

I know Mr. Cotton to whom he refers, and could, if you approved, tell him that his friend was allowed another chance on the score of poverty, but that he must make no more excuses.

G. W. E. R.
(George W. E. Russell.)
Dec : I

XIX

J & P.
1966/92

I am sorry that I cannot take a compassionate view as Mr. Russell suggests of this case. I agree entirely with Mr. Godley that the responsibility of refusing or granting a certificate rests with the Commissioners and not with the Secretary of State. If the Secretary of State sets a precedent of interfering with the Commissioners' discretion nothing but confusion can result. I rest my decision solely on this ground.

I must add however as an 'obiter dictum' that I should much doubt whether Mr. Ghose would be a desirable addition to the Service—and if Mr. Prothero or any one else is under the impression that a Hindoo ought to have a special exemption from the requirement of being able to ride, the sooner he is disabused of such an absurd notion the better.

K (Kimberley)
Dec : 2/92

XX

Draft
To Mr. Ghose & the
C. S. Commissioners submitted
for signature in accordance
with the decision of the
Sec. of State.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

F. T.
242 3/12/92. I. O.
7 Dec. 1892

Sir,

With reference to Sir Horace Walpole's letter of the 26th ultimo, I am directed to inform you that the Civil Service Commissioners decline to afford you further facilities for undergoing the examination in Riding and that, in the absence of the Statutory Certificate from the Commissioners stating that you are qualified to be appointed to the Civil Service of India, the Earl of Kimberley is unable to appoint you to that Service.

Y 4
A.A. Ghose Esq.
6 Burlington Road
Bayswater
W.

(Sd) George W.E. Russell.

XXI

I.O. 243
7 Dec. 1892

Sir,

I am directed by the Earl of Kimberley to aknowledge the receipt of Mr. Hennell's letter of the 29th ultimo respecting Mr. A.A. Ghose and, in reply, to transmit for the information of the Civil Service Commissioners copy of the reply sent to that gentleman in answer to his Memorial—

(Sd) George W.E. Russell

3
The Secretary
Civil Service Commission.

XXII

J & P
2035

6 Burlington Rd
Bayswater W

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

1892 Monday Dec. 12 1892

May it please your Lordship

As the Civil Service Commissioners have decided that they cannot give me a Certificate of qualification for an appointment to the Civil Service of India, I beg to applv to your Lordship for the remainder of the allowance that would have been due to me as a Probationer.

I am fully aware that I have really forfeited this sum by my failure in the Final Examination but in consideration of my bad pecuniary circumstances, I hope your Lordship will kindly listen to my petition.

I enclose the required Certificate as to residence and character at the University.

I am
Your Lordship's obedient
servant
A. A. Ghose

XXIII

Minute Paper. J.&P. 2035
1892 Public Department

Letter from Mr. A.A. Ghose Dated 12 Dec. 1892
Received 13...

Date		Initials	Subject
Under Secretary	13 Dec.	F.T.	
Secretary of State	14	G.W.E.R.	
Committee.	16	K	
Under Secretary	19	F.T.	Civil Service of India.
Secretary of State			Candidates selected 1890.
Council	19	H.W.	Mr. A.A. Ghose's allowance.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

1966
1926 92
See J & P 1966 &
previous papers.

MINUTE

Mr. Ghose now sends his University Certificate and prays for the payment of the allowance of £150, although he has lost his appointment owing to not passing his Riding Examination. (N. B. Mr. J. S. Cotton informs me that he has ground for hoping that Mr. G. will obtain at once at appointment in the service of the Gaekwar of Baroda.)

As this is the first case of a candidate rejected after passing his Periodical and Final examinations on account of failing to pass his Riding Examination it is submitted that the allowance of £150 be paid to Mr. A.A. Ghose, on the ground that candidates, who in past years (see list annexed) have lost their appointments through not qualifying in passing the Medical examination have been allowed to receive the sums due on passing the Final Examination.

There is, in my opinion, no doubt whatever as to the propreity of paying this sum to Mr. Ghose. He went to Cambridge in the faith that he would receive his allowance, provided he behaved well, to defray the expenses of his residence in the University, and the fact that he has failed to pass in riding does not affect the obligation of the Sec. of State.

A. G.
14 Dec. 92

I.O. London.
20. Dec. 1892

Sir,

I am directed, etc., to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 12th instant and, in reply, to inform you that the Earl of Kimberley authorizes the payment to you of the sum of £150.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

(Sd) Horace Walople
258
appd. J & P Committee
in circulation
19-12-92
approved Council,
19 December 1892
H.W.

A.A. Ghose Esq., 6, Burlington Road,
Bayswater. W.

XXIV

Reference Paper J. & P. 2035/1892
1746 Public Department.

Letter to Mr. A.A. Ghose Dated 20 Dec. 1892
Received

Referred to the Accountant General 21 Dec. 1892

With a request that he will remit to Mr. A.A. Ghose the sum of £ 150.
F. Trevor

Passed for payment less Income Tax : University Certificate retained.
Thos. W. Keith.
22 Dec. 92
Put S. F.T.
22-12-92

It is interesting to know how the brothers took the decision of I.C.S. Commissioners and the Secretary of State with regard to Sri Aurobindo's memorial which he was made to write by James S. Cotton and Binoy Bhushan. Sri Aurobindo later recounted that he was wandering in the streets of London when he knew he should have been at Woolwich. When he came home late in the evening he told Binoy "I am chucked", with almost a derisive smile. Binoy took it rather philosophically and offered to play cards. After some time Mono Mohan dropped in and on learning about his rejection from I.C.S. set up a howl as if heavens had fallen. After all the three sat down

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

to smoke and began to play cards.

The question of Sri Aurobindo's career had to be solved after the rejection from the I.C.S. In fact, James S. Cotton had already started negotiations with the Gaekwad Baroda, Sir Sayaji Rao, who was then in London. There is a reference to this in the correspondence with the India Office. (See XXIII Minute)

So, by the end of December 1892 everything seemed to be settled and Sri Aurobindo sailed in the 'Carthage' to join the Baroda State service. The meagre salary on which he was appointed was not accepted by Sri Aurobindo himself. He had no experience of worldly life and so left the negotiations to other people. It was on their advice that he accepted the offer. The H.H. was very much pleased to have an I.C.S. man for Rs. 200/- per month.

Soon he left for India by S.S.Carthage. There was a sequel which was humorous for Sri Aurobindo when he related it. A certain tailor in Cambridge was not to be deprived of what he believed to be his dues,—in this case £4/-, even when Sri Aurobindo had left England and joined the Baroda State service. Sri Aurobindo said he never felt that he was bound to pay the Sum firstly because Mono Mohan used to buy costly stuff and leave bills unpaid and secondly because he knew that the tailor was always charging double as he had to take credit for want of hard cash. He knew that the tailor had more than his due already. The tailor wrote to Bengal Government and even to Baroda State and when Sri Aurobindo explained the situation His Highness persuaded him to pay and the money was sent.

The relation between the three brothers during their stay in England is an obscure chapter of their life. There is no authentic proof about it except the letters written by Mono Mohan to Laurence Binyon. It emerges from these letters that Mono Mohan felt himself a little out of tune with the other two—he went into different lodgings when they went to 128, Cromwell Street,—the office of the Kensington Liberal Club.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

In a letter dated 20th April 1887 eh writes to Laurence about his poetic efforts :

"You are the only one who gives me any encouragement to write. . . My brothers are quite apathetic about them". And yet Mono Mohan's preoccupation with poetry must have stimulated Sri Aurobindo who had the incipient poet in him already trying to come to his own.

In another letter from Hastings, 1887, the evidently refers to Sri Aurobindo when he writes : "you have not been the only one to think some of my verses have a similarity to Mathew Arnold's. My brother once remarked to me that he thought I imitated Mathew Arnold in many of my poems. You will believe me when I say, if I have imitated him, it is perfectly unconsciously".

On January 8th, 1890, he gives an account of his illness in a letter and describes his miserable condition. There is a reference to his brother—evidently to Binoy Bhusan—for, Sri Aurobindo must have been at Cambridge at the time—from which it is also certain Mono Mohan must have been staying in separate lodgings : "At last to my joy my brother came to see me, who as you know is a very matter of fact person, with a commercial mind, a person who looks at everything from a business point of view. And he began comforting me very cheerfully with reflection that every body must die some day, remarking how conveniently near the cemetery was (Kempsford Gardens, I must tell you, looks out upon Brompton Cemetery and funerals pass down it everyday) and hoping undertakers did not charge very high as he had nearly come to the end of his last remittance."

Perhaps Binoy could not, under the economic stringency in London, be anything else than a matter of fact person, and especially when the remittances had come to an end and he had to learn, perforce, to look at everything from a business point of view.

In a letter of July 13th, 1890, he again writes to Laurence : "I intend to do some tutoring work and writing in the mean-

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

time which will give me enough to live on, with a little help from my brother." So, Binoy was rendering help to Mono Mohan to the extent possible from the remittances. Mono Mohan also asked for a copy of Prima versa for his brother from Laurence. That very likely was for Sri Aurobindo.

From Mono Mohan's correspondence it appears clear that his romantic temperament, the outer exuberance of his poetic nature and his great attraction for England made it not only his adopted country for a time but a country in which he loved to settle permanently. In the case of Sri Aurobindo we see he had no regret in leaving England. He had formed few friendships in England and none very intimate. He did not find the mental atmosphere congenial. Somebody referred to this poem "Envoi" and stated that it showed his attachment to England. Sri Aurobindo replied: "There was an attachment to English thought and literature, but not to England, he had no ties there and did not make England his adopted country as Mono Mohan did for a time".

Mono Mohan's politics, we can see in his latters, breathes high patriotism but at the end he gives it up and writes:

Hastings, 8th August, 1887.

"As for me I am going to throw politics overboard and have nothing more to do with them . . . I must leave my unhappy country to her own woes, she will go the way she is destined whatever that may be, and indeed I could help her little. I shall bury myself in poetry, simply and solely." He did. But this is in such a striking contrast to Sri Aurobindo's powerful advocacy of Indian independence and his revolutionary attitude even when he was at Cambridge. In fact, he himself answers the question how and when he got interested in Indian politics :

"His father began sending the Bengali newspapers with passages marked relating cases of maltreatment of Indians by Englishman and he wrote in his letters denouncing the British Government in India as a heartless government. At the age

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

of eleven Sri Aurobindo had already received strongly the impression that a period of general upheaval and great revolutionary changes was coming in the world and he himself was destined to play a part in it. His attention was now drawn to India and this feeling was soon canalised into the Idea of liberation of his own country. But the "firm decision" took full shape only towards the end of another four years. It had already been made when he went to Cambridge and as a member and for some time secretary of the Indian Majlis at Cambridge he delivered many revolutionary speeches which, as he afterwards learnt, had their part in determining the authorities to exclude him from the Indian Civil Service, the failure in the riding test was only the occasion, for in some other cases an opportunity was given for remedying this defect in India itself."

(P. 13) Sri Aurobindo on himself.

That the decision of liberating the country was taken by him is shown by his joining the "Lotus and dagger" society before he left for India. It was a "Secret Society in which each member vowed to work for the liberation of India generally and to take some special work in furtherence of that end. He became a member along with his brothers. But the Society was still-born". This happened immediately before his return to India and when he had finally left Cambridge,—that is, between October 1892 and Dec. 1892. The seven articles he wrote in the Induprakash—"New lamps for old"—immediately on his return to India, on Indian independence advocating a new ideal, a new approach and a new method to the Indian National Congress for adopting, is a further sign that his interest in India's freedom was not merely academic but dynamic, it was an intense flame that touched many Indian hearts and set them ablaze.

Sri Aurobindo began the study of Bengali while he was at Cambridge. The teacher for Bengali then was Mr. Towers, Sri Aurobindo used to say he was called "Pandit Towers". His knowledge of Bengali was limited to the works of Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar and early writers of Sanskritised prose.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

He knew Bodhodaya and others similar works. Once Sri Aurobindo took a passage of Bankim Chandra to him. After reading it carefully "Pandit Towers" turned round and said "But this is not Bengali!" Venn Alunini Cantabrigenses, Part II, Vol. VI, p. 214. Towers Robert Mason, M.A. 1889, incorporated from Dublin, I.C.S. University Teacher of Bengali 1888--1907. Admitted at Gains 1889. Son of Rev. Robert Towers, deceased, of Affane, Co. Waterfird, Born, June 27, 1840, at Grange, Country Tripperary. School, Kilkenny. (M.A. Trinity College, Dublin), died by his own hand April 6th, 1907, at Cambridge.

In the Majlis there used to be enough room for humour. The question of independence of subjected nations was being discussed. One undergraduate spoke eloquently and citing the example of Egypt repeated two or three times during his speech, "The Egyptians rose up like a man", when he spoke it for the third time somebody from the audience demanded "But how many times they sat down"?

A funny anecdote was recalled by Sri Aurobindo about his life at Cambridge : "Liars!" Well, a Panjabi student at Cambridge once took our breath away by the frankness and comprehensive profundity of his affirmation, "we are all liars". He meant "Lawyers" but his pronunciation gave his remark a deep force of philosophic observation and generalisation which he had not intended. But it seems to me the last word on human nature.") "But what strange ideas again! That I was born with a Supramental temperament and that I knew nothing of hard realities! Good God! My whole life has been a struggle with hard realities—from hardships, starvation in England and constant dangers and fierce difficulties to the far greater difficulties constantly cropping up here in Pondicherry, external and internal. My life has been a battle; the fact that I wage it now from a room upstairs and by spiritual means as well as others that are external makes no difference to its character.

"I suppose I have had myself an even more completely European education than you, and I have had too, my period

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

of agnostic denial, but from the moment I looked at these things I could never take the attitude of doubts and disbelief which was for so long fashionable in Europe."

"I myself have never been a sportsman nor—apart from taking a spectator's interest in cricket in England or a non-player member of the Baroda Club—taken up any physical games or athletics except some exercises learnt from Madrasi wrestlers in Baroda, such as Dand and Baithak, and these I took up only to put some strength and vigour into a frail and weak though not unhealthy body."

About Sri Aurobindo's stay in England no more information is available than is placed here. One is not likely to unearth more except from those few who are still alive and were contemporaries either at St. Paul's or at King's. However, it is satisfactory that testimony of three different men—Dr. K.D. Ghose, G.M. Prothero and Oscar Browning—is available not only about his brilliant academic career, but about his character even as a student. It is very likely that Dr. F.W. Walker must have impressed Sri Aurobindo profoundly during his career at St. Paul's. His deeply sympathetic nature could not have escaped Sri Aurobindo even in his young age.

In fact, Sri Aurobindo did recollect one or two inner changes that took place in him while he was in England. At the age of 13 he became conscious that he was selfish and he felt from inside that he should give up selfishness. He tried to carry out that idea in his own way in life.

Another time while reading Max Mullar's translations in the Sacred Books of the East Series he came across the idea of self or Atman. That struck him a some reality and he decided in his mind that Vedanta has something that is to be realised in life.

(From Alumni Cantarbrigienses by J. A. Vann Lit D.F.S.A.)

"Ghose Aravinda Acroyd, admitted scholar at King's, Oct. 11, 1890. (son of Dr. Krishnadhan of Khulna, Bengal, born August 15, 1872, at Calcutta); School St. Paul's; Matric

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Michalmas 1890; scholar; (classical Tripos Part I, 1st Class 1892); Prizeman. Admitted to I.C.S. 1890. In the educational service of the Maharaja Gaekwad of Baroda 1903-5. Resigned in order to carry political propaganda. Arrested 1908, in connection with bomb discoveries in Calcutta. Professor of English and Vice-principal Baroda College. Author : Essays on the Gita; Ideal of Human Unity; National Education; War and Self-determination; Evolution; Renaissance in India; Yoga and its Objects; Brain of India; The Mother; The Riddle of this World etc. etc, of 28 Rue Francois Martin, Pondicherry, in 1941."

(These volumes contain all the names of students who have passed through Cambridge University from 1752 A.D.).

This information needs some factual corrections : He was admitted to King's in January 1890. He passed his matriculation from St. Paul's in Dec. 1889. He joined the Baroda State Service in Feb. 1893 and resigned in 1906.

(Frederick William Walker, the High Master of St. Paul's School, North Kensington, London, A.D. 1876-1905.)

He was born in 1830 and in his young age was scholar of St. Savie's Grammar School, South Wark. In 1844 he went to Rugby and remained in Rugby Grammar School till 1849 when Arch Bishop Tait was the Head Master. Then he joined the Oxford University as scholar of Corpus Christi College and took first class in classical Moderations and Honours in mathematics and also was Literae—Humaniores. He took Boden Sanskrit scholarship and Venesian Law scholarship. At the end of his brilliant academic career he became a Fellow and Tutor at Corpus Christi Colege. He was a friend of Jowett, the famous classical scholar and master of Balliol College, Oxford. He was fond of teaching and in 1859 was appointed the first High Master of the Manchester Grammar Shool and also a public examiner. He was offered professorsnip of Latin and also Wayaflate Professorship in Moral Philosophy at Oxford, but he refused both the offers as he was very eager

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

to teach young children.

From 1859 to 1876, for 17 year he was High Master of the Manchester Grammar School during which period the school rose to a very eminent possion as an educational institution. It was because of his success at Manchester that the governing body of St. Paul's appointed him as the High Master. When he was asked : "When is your conception of the chief duty of the High Master," by the committee, he replied: "to walk about and hear everything".

He worked in St. Paul's from 1876 to 1905 when he retired. He died in 1910.

I reproduce here extracts from an article. "St. Paul's Shcool Fifty years ago;' (1933), by Laurie Magnus.

(It gives some idea of Dr. Walker's personality.) "A heavy and formidable figure, with bushy white beard, gleaming eyes, resonant voice, a strong smell of fragrant Havannah leaf, immense kindness, intimate knowledge of everybody, an exact classical scholar, a rough enemy but a firm friend, untiring in energy and impatient of indolence"—that was Dr. Walker the High Master.

About his teaching method he says :

"*The Tugs*". "The High Master with his uncanny knowledge of how and when a boy fell short, would collect in the Big Hall a concourse of fortuitous atoms, and personally supervise the intensive development of their missing faculties. They were a "floating" form without a class-room, and, indeed without class-mates or a form-master. For a period, short or long, they fed on a manna or honey-dew prepared for their special need by the High Master. The question of class-discipline never arose. Each boy floated alone in his own pond, and was not restored to the current of common life till the lacking part had grown in full measure."

"So the tittle boy in the high Master's wake, firmly grasped by the elbow during his journey, passed from the familiar com-

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

pany of a class-room to the lonely austerity of Hall." ..."Walker's administration raised the number of boys in the school from under 200 to over 600, and that throughout the immense work which this constant expansion involved, he never lost his power of individualising the units—not only calling them by names but treating them according to their nature....None of the hundreds of boys and very few of their parents found him disturbed or at a loss, and it is well known, though not through him, that some of the pupils' fees were paid out of his own purse."... "In the course of the High Master's long reign (1876-1905) nearly every master was selected by him. . . The fact that he had himself suffered poverty in his early days, and always said so, no doubt inspired him with sympathy and then with confidence and no one could talk to him for five minutes without seeing that the view that lack of means was a thing to be ashamed of was not merely one which he did not entertain, but one which was quite unintelligible to him."....

A stupid Colonel ventured a querry as to whether the moral tone of the school was high enough for his son to be sent there. He was startled by the answer: "My position as head of this school is infinitely superior to yours as a Colonel of a marching regiment. I have sent my own son here; what is good enough for my son is good enough for yours."

A lady who talked some nonsense about "Social Status" received a reply which, if less brutal, was at least as crushing, "Madam, so long as your son behaves and his fees are paid, we shall ask no embarrassing questions about your social status"...

"Mr. Walker never took any of the ordinary classes, and never had any fixed hours of teaching. But he took part in the teaching of the "special" class, coming in and going out as he chose, and a word must be said of his institution, which, so far as the writer knows, is peculiar to St. Paul's. The "special" contained two groups of boys; those who had just entered the school, and those who were in process of transition from one part of it to another. They sat in the General Hall and they wrote exercises of various kind,—Arnold, Clivius, and the like—by themselves and they received individual and not class teaching. Mr. Walker would go round and examine

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

these exercises, and thus, at the very start of a boy's school career, he had the opportunity of forming a judgment as to his abilities. When these had been fairly gauged he was put into a form, the standard of which was judged to be fitted for him. If a boy's work was in the main upto the level of a certain form, but he was backward in one or two subject, he was kept in the Hall for a rather longer period, and made to devote special attention to those subjects. Thus no boy automatically began his career at the bottom of the school; and many boys were saved from spending a term or more in a form where the majority of the work was too easy for them.... The majority, however, were boys of exceptional promise, who by one or two spells of individual teaching were enabled to move up the school more rapidly than they otherwise would, by skipping one or two classes in the order upwards. This had at least three great advantage in the case of the best scholars. It spared them the wear and tear of working their way through every class; it prevented their interest from flagging by reason of their work being too easy for them; and it brought them quickly to the top classes, where the work done had an interest of its own."

Sri Aurobindo's own description of his study at St. Paul's amply bears out the truth of these observations. He was examined by the High Master and found quite well-grounded in Latin and other subjects. But he was weak in Greek. So, he was coached in Greek in the "special" class and, as he was found exceptionally intelligent, he was pushed up in the upper forms of the school by him.

II

G.K. Chesterton, himself a Pauline, wrote in 1903 about Mr. Walker : "Mr. Walker did no class teaching. . . but then the High Master would mention some author that was being read in the highest class. Had they come to a passage where Cecero chaffs Sulpicius? Was it not equal in lightness of touch to anything in literature? or, sometimes it would be the very minutix that he would point at : Madvig's conjucture in such a place was probably right : the use of the genetive in the 20th ode was remarkable, and he knew nothing quite like it in

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Latin".

"A small boy of promise and ability had entered the school in Summer term. He had not been sufficiently well-grounded in Greek and Latin to obtain a school scholarship at the outset; his parents were badly off and could ill afford the school fee; still less could they afford any private tuition in holiday time. The High Master, having ascertained this, told the boy that he ought to get a scholarship and relieve his parents, and to that end do some work in his Summer holidays. He gave him his own holiday address in Scotland and through out the holidays the boy did two hour's daily work at Latin and Greek exercises, posted them to the High Master, and received them back daily through the post corrected in his own hand. To appreciate the sacrifice involved, it must be remembered that the boy was only eleven years old and was necessarily engaged in the most elementary exercises, the correction of which could only be the merest drudgery" . ..

"No one ever served for a term under Mr. Walker without seeing that his master passion was complete devotion to his school".

III

Rev. Gardiner Lupton, one of the masters of St. Paul's in Dr. Walker's time, writes :

"St. Paul's school is the result of Mr. Walker's brain, toil and devotion."

He was never angry without just cause—but no one entered the school who did not fear his anger . . .

"Except in the 'special' class he did not teach in the school; and though he appeared in school daily at morning and evening prayers, the boys seldom spoke with him, except when some occasion demanded it. But if the boys for the most part did not know him, he knew them . . . He was never at fault about any of the 600 boys under his care. He knew what anybody had done, what he was doing, what he was likely to

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

do."

"He had marvellous intuitive power of gauging a boy's qualities, both intellectual and moral, almost at sight" . . . That is unquestionably the distinguising quality of the great school master, and no one has been a great schoolmaster who has not possessed it; he seemed to possess it to a degree that seemed magical" . . ."But in one direction he never made a mistake; he never missed a clever boy or lost sight of him . . . Even an unusual degree of idleness in the chosen subject rarely baulked his purpose; the idleness was permanently cured".

In 1905 when he retired from the institution, many past students and teachers and the public also had gathered to give him a hearty send off. What he spoke on that occasion indicates the passion he had during his life :

"The best of friends must part. In 1859 I became High Master of the Manchester Grammar School. In 1876 I was elected to the High Mastership of Dean Colet's noble foundation, and now to-day is the last day of my long and happy service. For me "Vemit Summa dies at ineluctable fatum".

He ascribed to the courtesy and consideration of the Governing body, the invaluable possession of a competent and devoted staff of assistant masters, the cordial co-operation of parents and the industry and loyalty of the boys.

His last words were "Floreat Schola Paulina".

James S. Cotton. Full name is James Sutherland Cotton.

He was one of the editors of the "Academy" and secretary of the South Kensington Liberal Club situated at 128, Cromwell Road. He edited the Imperial gazettier of India. He was born in India at Coonoor and was brother of Sir Henry Cotton who was in I.C.S. cadre and later on resigned and joined the Indian National Congress which he helped in organising.

Mono Mohan in his letters addressed to Laurence Binyon refers to James Cotton twice or thrice. In December 1899, he

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

writes :

"I also go frequently to see the Cottons. Mrs. Cotton is a most charming woman; indeed I have never met anyone so pleasant with the exception of your aunt. She is not qualified as your aunt is, but is so sympathetic and takes such a private interest in everything that you cannot help liking her very much. Cotton is so very affiable and lent me quite a number of books of which I was very much in need. The fussy and amusing little man talked a great deal as usual about the Academy, his Oxford days etc. and very kindly asked me to come any evening and have a chat with him".

Some Contemporaries at Cambridge

1. Mahaffy Robert Pentland—was a contemporary at Cambridge; History Prizeman 1891.

2. Deshpande Keshav Ganesh—Student of St. John's, June 23, 1889, Elphinstone College, Bombay.

3. De Souza Francis Xavier, son of Peter Rozario . . . St. Joseph's College, Trichinopoly, admitted St. John's Oct. 1889; Scholar 1891, B.A.L.L.B., Law Tripos, First Class 1891; Part II, first Class 1893; M A.L.L.M. 1898.

4. Ferrers, Hugh Norman, admitted scholar at King's October 4th, 1889; Scholar 1892; B.A. History Tripos, 1st Class 1892, M.A. 1896; called to the bar in Lincoln's inn 1895; L.L.M. 1902. Practised in Malaya States, served in the great war 1914-1919. He had a brother Vyvyan Macleod Ferrers I.C.S. 1899, Sindh, retired 1935."

I tried to get in touch with the Ferrers while in England. After a great effort the following letter was received from Mrs. Ferrers, wife of the brother :

20th 10, 1955.

Dear Sir,

In reply to yours of the 20th my husband (V. M. Ferrers) and his brother have both passed away (my husband very

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

suddenly on March 6th this year). I am sorry I cannot assist you in the information you are needing.

I am
Yours sincerely
S.d. J.S. Ferrers.

1. Mono Mohan at Oxford had also a very similar experience though in his case it did not pass off so smoothly. He had practically a row with Zacharia & Co. for an exhorbitant charge which they made and he very narrowly escaped the court at Oxford.

2. A description of the ceremony of matriculation may be interesting from the point of view of a detail of University life in England. A quotation from Mono Mohan's letter of October 1887 from Oxford is given. It must be very similar at Cambridge.

Christ Church, October 1887.

"At 2-0 p.m. there was to be the beginning of the matriculation ceremony . . . We had to wait sometime about thirty freshmen of us until all the dons had assembled; when we had arranged ourselves on a form at the bottom of the hall while the deacon called out the names of scholars first, then commoners. I was called out of the first and approached with somewhat faltering steps towards the table. The dean was very gracious and said in a grave and mild voice, "Mr. Ghose, I hear very highly of you from Professor Max Muller; I hope you will prove yourself worthy of your election". Then I was handed over to my tutor, Mr. Hobhouse, who again handed me over to the treasurer.

At 4-15 we were matriculated finally and enrolled in the University and also presented with a statute book by the Vice. Chancellor."

3. Oscar Wilde—was Mono Mohan's friend, the latter used to visit him very often. Wilde used to describe him sometimes in his English way as "The young Indian panther in evening brown".

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Wilde was a brilliant conversationalist. Once some friends dropped in to see him and casually asked him how he had spent the morning. Wilde described at length with wealth of detail his visit to the Zoo and gave graphic description of all he had seen. At the end Mrs. Wilde put in a small voice "But how could you say that, Oscar, when you have been all the time with me this morning?" He replied, "darling, one must be imaginative some time." This little anecdote was related by Sri Aurobindo at Pondicherry.

(Description of matriculation at Oxford.)

"The treasurer remarked coldly—"Where is your fee?" I was utterly dazed at the suddenness of the thing. (For, if you remember, I all along thought from Dr. Marphy's words, that they would give me £20 of the scholarship to pay immediate expenses) while a chill perspiration broke over me, the treasurer said bluntly, "Haven't you brought it?" I could only say "no".

"Bring it to me this afternoon"—at which I answered stupidly "yes", though I well knew my brother had not more more than £3 at most in his pocket and as it turned out there is not more than q10 at the bank just now.

Mono Mohan's letter to Lawrence Binyon

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

3

In Prison

We saw in the previous chapter that during the months of March and April 1908—especially April—an atmosphere of tension and crisis was building up, the known parties to the undeclared war being the Moderates, the alien bureaucracy and the Nationalists. The Moderates had their Convention and their new Congress Constitution, the bureaucracy were paring their nails to come to closer grips with the Nationalists so as to be able to liquidate them, and the underground revolutionaries were chafing at the Nationalist leash and were impatient to let go a campaign of terrorism. Such was the situation, generally in India, but to a much more pronounced degree in Bengal. In the eyes of the Moderates, Sri Aurobindo and his inflammable writings in the Bande Mataram were the major obstacle on the path of slow, orderly, constitutional "progress". In the eyes of the bureaucracy, Sri Aurobindo was Public Enemy Number One—all the more dangerous because he had a hypnotic hold on his numberless followers young and not so young, his writings were diabolically clever and often couched cunningly in the language of Vedanta or Tantra, and in his movements and actions he was altogether slippery like an eel. He talked of India resurgent, Asia triumphant, and Europe is frantic retreat. He spoke of individual salvation and of national mukti. He invoked Shiva's tandav death-dance so that Sati might achieve resurrec-

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

tion. Was he not the author of that notorious political dynamite, Bhavani Mandir? Did he not cause the split at Surat? And Sri Aurobindo didn't even hesitate to preach insurrection. The language of warfare and revolution came as second nature to him. There was the stamp of authority in even his casual utterances, and his speeches and editorials were like winging squadrons racing across the murky-political sky to cause confusion and terror among the Moderates and the bureaucracy. The man was too internally clever, too terribly in earnest, and too utterly unpredictable and uncontainable. Danger was the name of the man. He had to be silenced, he had to be put out of the way.

For some time past, events had been moving swift to what seemed to be their preordained configuration and conclusion. Curzon had divided Bengal, and injured and insulted a great nation; and, by a strange irony of history, his successor Minto was called upon to face the music. As Sir Pratap Singh, a titled dignitary of the time, put it with charming naivete, "Lord Curzon has strewn Lord Minto's bed with thorns, and he must lie on them". "Sedition" was divined here—there—everywhere, and prosecution after prosecution was launced. Disaffection —of course ! which normal person in India could possibly have entertained "affection" for the soulless heartless mindless bureaucracy? And wasn't it absurdly easy for "want of affection" to sour into downright "disaffection"? Yet the promiscuous prosecutions and barbarous sentences continued with mounting ferocity. The arrest and trial of the saintly Brahmabandhab Upadhyaya and his death while in detention at the Campbell Hospital had sent out a wave of resentment all over Bengal, all over India. "His declaration in Court and his death", wrote Sri Aurobindo, "put a seal upon the meaning of his life and left his name stamped indelibly on the pages of history as a saint and martyr of the new faith". Vivekananda's youngest brother, Bhupendranath Datta, wouldn't defend himself and went willingly to jail. And so—printer, publisher, editor, contributor, worker—anyone almost ran the risk of sudden apprehension on the slightest pretext, trial for sedition or conspiracy, and fine and incarceration—or worse.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Mataram, 14 April 1908.

These endless trials and the heavy sentences passed on the patriots seemed shocking to John Morley himself, and on one occasion he wrote to the Viceroy in an outspoken manner :

> I must confess to you that I am watching with the deepest concern and dismay the thundering sentences that are being passed for sedition, etc. We must keep order, but excess of severity is not the path to order. On the contrary, it is the path to the bomb.

Sri Aurobindo too, in an article on 'Indian Resurgence and Europe', referred to "the extreme of bomb-throwing Anarchism" as one of the symptoms of the modern Western malaise, and would have liked India to be free from such aberrations. But repression and terrorism fed upon one another in a competitive craze, almost as in the parable of Sin and Death in Paradise Lost :

> hourly conceived
>
> And hourly born, with sorrow infinite
> To me . . . then, bursting forth
> Afresh with conscious terrors vex me round,
> That rest or intermission none I find. Book II. 11. 796 ff.

Morley had correctly evaluated the consequences of "excess of severity". The burning anger of the people was particularly directed against one D.H. Kingsford, the District Magistrate of Calcutta who had tried the case against Upadhyaya,—who was even otherwise known for his drastic sentences against the patriots, and who had especially earned undying infamy by ordering the flogging in Court of a boy of fifteen, Sushil Sen, till he fell down unconscious bleeding all over. This last atrocity had so horrified the country and evoked such a storm of protest that Kingsford had to be transferred from Calcutta to Muzzaferpore (now in Bihar). But the revolutionaries had their eyes upon him, and decided to visit him with swift punishment there. On the evening of

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

30 April 1908, two boys—Khudiram Bose and Prafulla Chaki—threw a bomb at a closed carriage that was supposed to carry Kingsford, but the bomb actually killed two wholly innocent ladies, Mrs. and Miss Pringle-Kennedy, wife and daughter of a local advocate, as they were going out in the carriage from their Club. On 1 may, as Sri Aurobindo was sitting in the office of the Bande Mataram in Calcutta, the wire from Muzzaferpore was shown to him. Sri Aurobindo also read in the Empire that the Police Commissioner had said that they knew who were in the murder plot, and they would all be arrested without delay. Whatever the provocation caused by men like Kingsford and the bureaucracy whom they represented, the Muzzaferpore bomb-outrage, even had it got at the intended victim, would have proved nothing and solved nothing. But as it actually turned out, it was a ghastly tragedy, a piece of pure terrorist excrescence. And immediately Shyamsundar Chakravarti wrote editorially in the Bande Mataram :

> Outrages of this kind have absolutely no sanction in our ancient tradition and culture . . . Moderatism is imitation of British constitutionalism, this form of so-called Extremism, wherever it may be found to exist in this country, is imitation of European Anarchism; and both are equally different from and absolutely foreign to the spirit of the Nationalism which, though opposed by one and occasionally mistaken for the other, is bound in the long run to carve out the future of India, and realise the eternal destiny of her ancient and composite people. Bande Mataram Weekly, 10 May 1908.

But perhaps understandably, yet most unfortunately, under the circumstances—the Government lost their balance and sense of measure, and started arresting persons right and left. The police, of course, fastened their suspicion at once on the young men (whom they had shadowed before) camping at the Manicktolla Gardens. "A spy, Rajani Sarkar by name, had gained admittance into the garden as a friend of one of the boys and conveyed information to the police. The police waited till

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

the Muzzaferpore outrage, and then closed in." (C.C. Dutt, in an article in the Sunday Times, 17 December 1950). Khudiram and Prafulla both belonged to this group, and the other members also must have known how things had turned out at Muzzaferpore. Sri Aurobindo too presumably sent word to his brother Barindra, advising him to clear out with his companions after wiping out all traces of their bomb-making activities. Some of the young men remembered that there were two or three rifles with Abinash Bhattacharya in Sri Aurobindo's house, and these were brought back and buried in the Gardens along with the revolvers and bomb-making materials. Some of the group were sent away, and the others tried their best to destroy all their papers and all evidence of their identity and occupation. Tired out at last, they went to bed late at night on 1 May, hoping to get away before daybreak, for they had, earlier in the evening, been suspiciously interrogated by seeming strangers. But they slept a little too long, and they were surprised before dawn by the police. The scene has been etched from memory by one of the young men, Nolini :

> Shadowy forms were moving about the place, there was a clatter and a creaking of boots. Suddenly out of dark silence, a conversation arose :
> "You are under arrest. Your name?"
> "Barindra Kumar Ghose."
> "Arabinda Ghose?"
> "No, Barindra Kumar Ghose."
> "Well, we'll see."
>
> The next thing I knew was a hand clapping on my shoulders. "Come," said a voice . . .
>
> . . .we were all arrested in a body. The police made us stand in a line under the strict watch of an armed guard. They kept us standing the whole day with hardly anything to eat... In the evening, the order came, "Follow us". But follow where? . . . We were taken to the lock-up at the Lal Bazar police, station. Nolini Kanta Gupta, Reminiscences, pp. 22-3; 25.

They remained there for two days and two nights "herded

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

together like beasts and shut up in a cell". Then they were taken to the Alipur Jail, where they had cooked rice to eat (the first meal in three days), and "it tasted so nice and sweet that we felt as if we were in heaven".

After Barindra and his companions had been taken away, the Gardens and the house were turned upside down, the weapons and bombs were unearthed, and some important papers—left behind carelessly—were secured. Simultaneously, house-searches were instituted in other places too, and many suspects were taken into custody. On 5 May, Prafulla Chaki was arrested, but he made good his word that he wouldn't live to be tortured by the police and driven to confess any secrets : he pushed the revolver muzzle into his mouth, pressed the trigger with his fingers, and heroically ended his life. Among those arrested was Sushil Sen, whom Kingsford had earlier ordered to be flogged in the open Court. The prosecution against Sri Aurobindo in 1907 had led to a procession and a protest : this had provoked some police action : this had led to Sushil's altercation with a policeman : and this to the flogging of Sushil which, in its turn, to the bomb-attempt on Kingsford : and the misfired attempt to Sushil's arrest (and to Sri Aurobindo's as well)—what a sinister chain-reaction!

There was now a wild leap of speculation, a quick spread of nameless terror; and the situation grew every hour more and more ominous and menacing. As the Bande Mataram said, it was the merest affectation to deny that the Muzzaferpore outrage had "created a most critical situation in the country".

It was, perhaps, not wholly unnatural that the panic-stricken authorities should have suspected that Sri Aurobindo—wasn't he the elder brother of Barindra Kumar Ghose?—was also somehow or other connected with the revolutionary organisation, the miniature bomb-factory at the Manicktolla Gardens, and perhaps even with the bomb-throwing at Muzzaferpore. The police had, in fact, expected to surprise Sri Aurobindo at the Gardens, and were disappointed that they

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

had found only Barindra and the smaller fry. In their secret files, the Government had doubtless a detailed dossier about Sri Aurobindo, and about a month and a half earlier an unknown gentleman had warned him that some wicked people were conspiring against him and his brother Barindra. In this section I have drawn liberally upon Sri Aurobindo's Tales of Prison Life (authorised English version of his Kara-Kahini, published in Sri Aurobindo Mandir Annual, Number 27, 1968). The reference to the 'unknown gentleman' occurs on p. 124 of the Annual.

After the Muzzaferpore tragedy, the Government decided they would take no more chances. Orders were therefore issued for his immediate arrest. It was a Friday night, and Sri Aurobindo was sleeping peacefully in his first floor room at 48, Grey Street the office of the *Nava Shakti* to which he had moved some time earlier from his Scott's Lane residence. At about five in the morning next day (5 May), Sarojini his sister rushed into his room in terror and woke him up. The small room was now filled with armed policemen, some senior officers like Superintendent Craegon, and "red turbans, spies and search witnesses". Pistols in hand, some of them struck heroic attitudes, as if they were out to storm a fortress. It was even reported that "a white hero had aimed a pistol" at Sarojini's heart. Sri Aurobindo was put under arrest, after he had read the search warrant and signed it. Under instructions from Craegan, Sri Aurobindo was handcuffed and a rope was tied round his midriff, and a constable stood behind holding the rope; but about half an hour latter, these wanton indignities were removed. Abinash Bhattacharya and Sailen Bose were also put under arrest, and (as Sri Aurobindo recorded later in Kara-Kahini) Craegan behaved as though "he had entered into the lair of some ferocious animal, as if we were uneducated, wild lawbreakers." There was an intermittent passage-at-arms between Craegan and Sri Aurobindo, and when the former asked whether it wasn't shameful for a graduate, an educated man like him,to sleep on the floor of such a poky house of answer was: "I am a poor man, and I live like one". "So you have worked up all this mischief to become a rich man!" What was the use

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

of trying to explain to that thick-headed lump of insolence the love of the Motherland, the nature of sacrifice or the sublimity of the vow of poverty? Sri Aurobindo did not make the attempt.

The search operations continued from five-thirty to about eleven-thirty. "'Search' was not the word for it", was the Reporter's account in the Bande Mataram; "it (the bedroom) was turned inside out. The ransacking went on for hours. . ." Exercise books, letters, poems, scraps, essays, translations. and other papers were seized with avidity and taken away. One of the officers, Clark of 24 Parganas, looked suspiciously at a lump of clay kept in a cardboard box. Perhaps it was a new kind of explosive! Actually the earth had been brought to Sri Aurobindo from Dakshineshwar by a young man connected with the Ramakrishna Mission, and Sri Aurobindo's wife, Mrinalini, had preserved it as a sacred relic. Other rooms were also searched, and all kinds of things were seized. A bicycle, an iron safe—they were bodily removed.

At long last, the search came to an end and Sri Aurobindo was taken to the police station where he had his bath and lunch; and after being made to wait for about two hours at Lal Bazar, he was removed to Royd Street, where he stayed all evening being treated by the detective, Maulvi Shams-ul-Alam, "to a delicious lecture on religion". Under the cover of expatiating on the links between Hinduism and Islam, the Maulvi made a naive attempt to pump Sri Aurobindo for incriminating information, but of course without success. He was then taken in rain and storm to the lock-up at Lal Bazar and lodged for a while in a room in the company of Sailen Bose who had also been arrested. But presently, on the Police Commissioner Mr. F.L. Halliday's orders, Sailen was removed to another room. Turning to Sri Aurobindo, Halliday put the rhetorical question : "Don't you feel ashamed to have been involved in this dastardly deed? Sri Aurobindo snapped back : "What right have you to assume that I was involved?" And he added, "I totally deny having had anything to do with this murder". And Mr. Halliday kept silent.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

The arrest of Sri Aurobindo—not the event alone, but even more, the manner in which the arrest had been made, the handcuffing and the other atrocities and humiliations—created a mighty sensation in the whole country. The Amrita Bazar Patrika asked editorially :

> But why were they (Sri Aurobindo and others) pounced upon in this mysterious manner, handcuffed, and then dragged before the Police Commissioner? Where was the necessity for this outrage. . . It served no other purpose than that of wantonly outraging public feeling. It is not known why, having handcuffed Sri Aurobindo and tied him with a rope round his waist, the police offiers had these removed after some time. Was it because of the protest of Bhupendranath Basu, the Congress Moderate leader, who had come to see things for himself when he heard about the arrest? Or was it on the intervention of Benod Kumar Gupta, as claimed by him? (Sri Aurobindo Mandir Annual, No. 27, p. 122).

Besides Sri Aurobindo and Barindra, over thirty others had also been promptly rounded up—and more were to follow in the coming days—in connection with the Muzzaferpore outrage, the bomb-factory at Manicktolla Gardens, and the supposed wide-spread revolutionary conspiracy of which these were apparently but the startling first symptoms.

The next day (Sunday) war spent by Sri Aurobindo in the lock-up—some of the boys arrested at the Manicktolla Gardens had been brought there too. On being presented on Monday before the Commissioner, Sri Aurobindo, Abinash Bhattacharya and Sailen Bose declined to make a formal statement, having already had some experience of legal procedures and quibblings. Nolini Kanta Gupta told Mr. Halliday that "he was oblivious of the reason for which he was charged". Barindra and some others, however, seem to have made a fairly full confession after their arrest, but only "with a view to save the party by the sacrifice of some of its members" (in other words, themselves). It was a deliberate attempt at self-sacrifice "so that, instead of all of us dying

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

together, some might still live on to carry the work forward". Actually, this move didn't quite succeed, since most of those connected with the business were arrested and tried together.

Next day (Tuesday) Sri Aurobindo and the other prisoners were produced before Mr. T. Thronhill, Chief Presidency Magistrate, and the prosecution tried to make capital out of the fact that Sri Aurobindo was one of the proprietors of the Gardens where the bombs had been manufactured. On a point of right jurisdiction, Thornhill transferred the case to the Court of the District Magistrate at Alipur. Sri Aurobindo, along with a few others, was now taken in a carriage to the Alipur Court, and from there to the Alipur jail. An unknown gentleman told Sri Aurobindo that, as he was likely to be placed in solitary confinement, if he had any message to send to his people, he might make use of him (the speaker). "I am mentioning this fact", writes Sri Aurobindo in his prison memories, "as an example of my countrymen's sympathy and unsought kindness towards me". The prisoners were permitted to bathe, and after being clothed in jail uniforms, each was taken to the cell assigned to him; "the bath, after four days, was heavenly bliss. . . I, too, entered my lonely cell. The doors closed, and my prison life at Alipur began. . . Next year, on 6 May, I was released".

The "Alipur Case"—or the Manicktolla Bomb-Factory Case—or the Muzzaferpore Bomb Outrage Case as it came to be variously called was the talk of the whole country for the next twelve months and more. Reactions of particular groups of people followed predictable lines. The Moderates unhesitatingly deplored the outrage but were guardedly anxious about the fate of Sri Aurobindo whom they could not fail to respect from a distance. The Nationalists deplored the event too, but also blamed the Government for unleashing a campaign of repression that alone had provoked such acts of terrorism, uesless as they might be and even meriting condemnation. The Anglo-Indian community in India felt a shiver and exhorted the Government to take the sternest possible action against the offenders and to prevent the recurrence of such acts of infamy.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

The revolutionaries who had escaped arrest lay low for a while containing their anger. Jatindranath Mukherjee (Bagha Jatin) was one of the revolutionaries who had managed to escape arrest, and somehow tried to keep the organisation going. As for the bureaucracy, their overwhelming concern was with Sri Aurobindo. He was the core, he was the superbrain, he was the heart and soul of the whole movement of Nationalism and the whole underground revolutionary organisation. The superlatively cunning creature had at last been caught and caged; and woe unto the bureaucracy if he should now be allowed to escape!

There were, perhaps, hesitations in high quarters whether it would be altogether wise to press the prosecution against a man so brilliant—a man admittedly endowed with such high intellectual and moral qualities—as Sri Aurobindo. Especially when there was so little direct evidence to connect him either with the diminutive bomb-factory or with the killing of the two ladies at Muzzaferpore. To set those feeble hesitations at rest, Mr. E.A. Gait, the Chief Secretary of Bengal, affirmed in his report to the Home Secretary of the Government of India on 16 May 1908 :

> Of Arabinda's connection with the secret society we have little direct evidence, the reason being that, here as in the case of the editorship of the paper (the reference here is to the Bande Mataram case of the previous year), he has been careful to avoid doing anything which would enable any charge to be proved against him. There is, however, no real doubt as to his being intimately connected with it . . . The Lieutenant-Governor (of Bengal) has no doubt whatever on this point, nor has he any doubt that his is the master mind at the back of the whole extremist campaign in Bengal . . . The conviction of the other persons concerned would be of no avail if Arabinda were set free; for, in that case he would lose no time in starting a fresh conspiracy, and the work now done would be altogether in vain . . . In the interest of peace and good government, it is absolutely necessary that this man should be removed

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

from the political arena".

This is a very remarkable document indeed, with a down-to-earth Machiavellian frankness about it! The Chief Secretary had no doubt and the Lieutenant-Governor had no doubt that Sri Aurobindo "should be removed from the political arena", with or without convincing evidence—if necessary even without the formalities of normal legal procedure. If was always possible in invoke the provisions of the Bengal State Prisoners Regulation III of 1818, under which Government were empowered to seize and remove from the scene anybody they thought inconvenient or undesirable. What happened at Muzzaferpore came handy, it was something of a godsend to the Government, for even without that bomb-action Sri Aurobindo was clearly a marked man and would have sooner or later found himself spirited away by a recourse to that infamous Regulation of 1818.

If Muzzaferpore thus helped Government to make up their mind quickly and arrest Sri Aurobindo and convey him to the Alipur jail, these happenings also gave a decisive turn to his life and transformed, by a process of unbelievable alchemy, the solitary cell into a spiritual retreat and cave of sadhana. As Sri Aurobindo later wrote in his Kara-Kahini ('Tales of Prison Life') :

> At that time I had no idea that I happened to be the main target of suspicion and that according to the police I was the chief killer, the instigator and secret leader of the young terrorists and revolutionaries. I did not know that that day would mean the end of a chapter of my life, and that there stretched before me a year's imprisonment during which period all my human relationships would cease, that for a whole year I would have to live beyond the pale of society, like an animal in a cage. And when I would re-enter the world of activity it would not be the old familiar Aurobindo Ghose. Rather it would be a new being, a new character, intellect, life, mind, embarking upon a new course of action that would come out of the ashram at Alipur . . . For long I had made great efforts

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

for a direct vision (saksat darsan) of the Lord of my Heart; had entertained the immense hope of knowing the Preserver of the world, the Supreme Person (Purushottama) as friend and master. But due to the pull of a thousand worldly desires, attachment towards numerous activities, the deep darkness of ignorance, I did not succeed in that effort. At long last the most merciful all-good Lord (Shiva Hari) destroyed all these enemies at one stroke and helped me in my path, pointed to the yogasram, Himself staying as Guru and companion in my little abode of retirement and spiritual discipline . . . The only result of the wrath of the British Government was that I found God.

But this of course the Government couldn't know, and certainly it wouldn't ever have come into their calculations. They had got their man, and they wished to see he didn't escape the legal net this time, as he had done adroitly the previous year. The most eminent criminal lawyer at the time in India, Mr. Eardley Norton, then at the dizzy peak of his powers and reputation, was engaged by the Government to conduct the prosecution. It was therefore necessary to organise the defence of Sri Aurobindo on a reasonably efficient basis. His sister, Sarojini Devi, accordingly made the following fervent appeal for funds :

My countrymen are aware that my brother Aravinda Ghose stands accused of a grave offence. But I believe, and I have reason to think that the vast majority of my countrymen believe, that he is quite innocent. I think if he is defended by an able counsel he is sure to be acquitted . . . I know all my countrymen do not hold the same political opinions as he. But I feel some delicacy in saying that probably there are few Indians who do not appreciate his great attainments, his self-sacrifice, his single-minded devotion to the country's cause and the high spirituality of his character. This emboldens me, a woman, to stand before every son and daughter of India for help to defend a brother,—my brother and theirs too.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

This moving appeal, wrung from a sister's heart, was eloquently supported by the Bengalee, the Amrita Bazar Patrika and other leading papers. Response to the appeal was not very slow in coming; and it came—as it often does—from the most unexpected places. A blind beggar—all deathless honour to him! —gave Sarojini one rupee out of the alms he had assiduously collected over a period of months; an impecunious student, by denying himself his daily tiffin, gave a modest contribution; the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha bestirred itself to make collections for the Sri Aurobindo Defence Fund. And numerous other institutions and individuals and agencies—spread all over the country—also interested themselves in the matter, and a steady stream of support, psychological as well as financial, started pouring in. In spite of all this fund of general goodwill in the country, the actual amount collected was by no means very impressive at first, for after two months hardly Rs. 23,000 had been put together. In those early weeks, the significant achievement was the rebuff administered to the Government, for they could now have no doubt that the people were with the supposed "criminal" and not with the prosecuting alien bureaucracy who were only the object of universal detestation. Nay more : contributions and messages of sympathy came even from Europe, from Australia, from America—and the bureaucracy felt isolated from civilised opinion and was left to fend for itself somehow.

Meanwhile the preliminary trial started in Alipur before Mr. L. Birley, the Officiating District Magistrate, on 19 May, a fortnight after Sri Aurobindo's arrest. Bail had been refused to the accused, and all of them were charged under Sections 121-A, 122, 123 and 124 of the Indian Penal Code for "organising a gang for the purpose of waging war against the Government by means of criminal force". Even the preliminary trial was a tortuous process. The intended victim of the Muzzaferpore bomb-attack, Mr. Kingsford, in his evidence before Mr. Birley said with a breezy statistical complacency :

> I was Chief Persidency Magistrate, Calcutta, from August 1904 to March 1908. I had to try many sedition cases . . .

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

I acquitted as many as I convicted.

The preliminary trial, a protracted affair, went on from 19 May to 19 August, when Mr. Birley framed charges at last and committed the accused to sessions. It was a macabre business, and Sri Aurobindo thought that he and his fellow-accused were sitting, not in a British Court of Justice, but in a world of fiction or fantasy. Of the prosecuting counsel, Mr. Norton, Sri Aurobindo has left a vivid sketch, which almost skins alive that once roaring hero of a hundred judicial theatres :

> The star performer of the show was the government counsel, Mr. Norton. Not only the star performer, but he was also its composer, stage manager and prompter. . . he certainly was the king among beasts at the Alipur court. . . .

Of the three kinds of great lawyers—the subtle legal analysts, the cunning cross-examiners of witnesses, and the loud-mouthed bullies—Norton was the foremost in the third category. No use criticising him, for that was, after all, his svabhava ! And his svadharma was to earn his daily fee of one thousand rupees by trying to win the case for the Government by hook or by crook. And what an adroit creative genius he was, almost a sort of Shakespeare :

> And Mr. Norton happened to be the Shakespeare of this play. . . (he) never allowed any material, true or false, cogent or irrelevant, from the smallest to the largest, to go unused; on top of it he could create such a wonderful plot by his self-created and abundant imagination, inference and hypothesis that the great poets and writers of fiction like Shakespeare and Defoe would have to acknowledge defeat before this grand master of the art. . . just as Falstaff's hotel bill showed a pennyworth of bread and countless gallons of wine, similarly in Norton's plot "an ounce of proof was mixed with tons of inference and suggestion". . . .

If Norton was a creative genius, his epic needed a hero or

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

villain—and Sri Aurobindo was cast for that role.

> Like Satan in Milton's Paradise Lost, in Mr. Norton's plot at the centre of the mighty rebellion stood I, an extraordinarily sharp, intelligent and powerful, bold, bad man ! Of the National movement I was the alpha and the omega, its creator and saviour, engaged in undermining the British Empire. As soon as he came across any piece of excellent or vigorous English, he would jump and loudly proclaim, Aurobindo Ghose!. . . . It is a pity I was not born as an Avatar, otherwise thanks to his intense devotion and ceaseless contemplation of me for the nonce, he would surely have earned his release, mukti, then and there. . . .

When some of the witnesses deposed contrary to the requirements of his Poem, Norton "would grow red with fury and, roaring like a lion, he would strike terror in the heart of the witness and cower him down". He lost his temper equally whenever the defence counsel, Bhuban Chatterji, raised objections or points of order. As for the Magistrate, Mr. Birley, he was content to follow Norton's lead : "he laughed when Norton laughed, grew angry as Norton went angry". Sri Aurobindo clinches the double-portrait with the remark : "Because such a counsel had been matched with a magistrate of the same calibre, the case had all the more taken on the proportions of a play".

There were, then, among the numerous "minor characters" the different categories of witnesses : the police and the secret service men; the men eager to please the police; and the people dragged unwillingly to give evidence. The method of examination and cross-examination followed by Norton struck Sri Aurobindo as very perverse and foolish and utterly wasteful :

> This sort of method for conducting cases is possible perhaps only in India. . . . Hauling hundreds of witnesses, gathered on a basis of guesswork, and without enquiring whether one was guilty or not, wasting the country's

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

finances and keeping without any sense the accused for long periods under the hardships of prison life—it is worthy only of the police force of this country.

As for the methods of identification, the less said the better. Two police officers declared on oath that they had seen Charuchandra Roy of Chandernagore at Shyambazar on a particular day; but on that day and at that hour, he has been talking with the Mayor of Chandernagore and other important people at the Howrah railway station, and these were willing to depose in his favour. Charu Roy had to be released on a representation by the French Government, but the other accused—some of them equally innocent—were not so lucky. Commenting on this and other features of the trial, Sri Aurobindo wrote later in Kara-Kahini :

> On the whole, during this trial at every stage I could find, in the British legal system, how easily the innocent could be punished, sent to prison, suffer transportation, even loss of life. Unless one stood in the dock oneself, one cannot realise the delusive untruth of the Western penal code. It is something of a gamble, a gamble with human freedom, with man's joys and sorrows, a life-long agony for him and his family, his friends and relatives, insult, a living death. In this system there is no counting as to how often guilty persons escape and how many innocent persons perish. . . . if society has to be preserved with the aid of so much sin and suffering, the burning sighs of the innocent and their heart's blood, its preservation would seem unnecessary.

What were Sri Aurobindo's feelings when he found himself suddenly checkmated, torn from society, and thrown into solitary confinement? What did he think, how did he feel, in what manner did he bear the rigours of the imprisonment—the bad food, the prison clothes, the lack of books and journals, the want of light and free air, and, above all, the creeping solitariness of the gloomy nine by five feet windowless dungeon that was now his Ashram, his Sadhanalaya—his living tomb—in the worthy Government Guest House or Hotel at Alipur?

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Sri Aurobindo has answered our questions in some detail, and he has done so using language that often acquires wings, and wafts us to the seventh heaven of radiant ecstasy and hope incommensurable. His Bengali work of reminiscences, Kara-Kahini, has been referred to already; and there is also his English Messianic speech at Uttarpara, and both belong to the period immediately after his release from prison a year later. In the early days of his life in the gloomy cell, he had indeed been subjected to a refinement of torture; and he had first to achieve, as a result of his long and desperate struggle with thirst and nausea, effective freedom from them. In that furnace that was his cell, he was given two coarse jail-made rugs as a makeshift bedding—he spread one on the floor and rolled the other into a sort of pillow. He had often to roll on the bare ground to cool his body when the heat became unbearable, and he found the touch of Mother Earth so much more soothing than the embrace of the rugs. When the rains came, the cell would be flooded with water, dirtt, leaves and straw, and he had to snuggle to a corner for the night.

As for the "fittings", there was a versatility about them. The plate and the bowl were expected to serve in a variety of ways, especially the all-sufficient bowl :

> Among inert objects it was like the British civilian. Just as he civilian, ipso facto, is fit and able to undertake any administrative duty, be it as judge, magistrate, police, revenue officer, chairman of municipality, professor, preacher, whatever you ask him to do he can become at your merest saying,—just as for him to be an investigator, complainant, police magistrate, even at times to be the counsel for defence, all these roles hold a friendly concourse in the same hospitable body, my dear bowl was equally multi-purpose. The bowl was free from all caste restrictions, beyond discrimination. . . Where else could I find such an aid and preceptor to get rid of the sense of disgust?

Sri Aurobindo and the others hadn't yet been tried, nor found guilty; they were in prison on suspicion. Even so, they were herded together like thieves and dacoits, and kept "like

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

animals in a cage", given food unfit for animals, and made to endure water scarcity, thirst and hunger, sun, rain and cold ! But Sri Aurobindo himself didn't mind it at all; rather he learned to welcome this abnormal communal life, as he had loved at the time of the Surat Congress to travel by train in the third class and to camp with the delegates, eating and sleeping together in a "wonderful feeling of brotherhood". The lesson in communal life went a further stage at the Alipur jail :

> During my stay. . . I ate, lived, went through the same hardships and enjoyed the same privileges with the other convicts, my fellow nationals, the peasants, iron-monger, potter, the doms and the bagdis, and I could learn that the Lord who dwells in every body, this socialism and unity, this nation-wide brotherhood had put its stamp on my life's dedication. . .

The shift from the Lal Bazar lock-up to the solitary cell at Alipur was nevertheless welcome, and since Sri Aurobindo had faith in God, even the loneliness did not prey upon him. The food of course was atrocious—"coarse rice spiced with husk, pebbles, insects, hair, dirt and other such stuff"—being tasteless as well as lacking any nutritive value whatsoever. Boiled rice itself was a trinity—appearing now in its Wisdom (Shiva) aspect as white, now in its Hiranyagarbha aspect as yellow stuff, and again in its Virat Purusha aspect of grey eminence. But that life too was bearable, for after all God gave the sufferers the strength to bear even that life. In answer to a Poona editor trying to raise a laugh over this "excess of Godwardness in prison", Sri Aurobindo wrote in Kara-Kahini :

> Alas for the pride and littleness of men. . . The manifestation of God, should it not be in prison, in huts, ashrams, in the heart of the poor, but rather in the temples of luxury of the rich or the bed of repose of pleasure-seeking selfish folk? God does not look for learning, honour, leadership, popular acclaim, outward ease and sophistication. To the poor He reveals Himself in the form of the Compassionate Mother. He who sees the Lord in all men, in all nations, in his own land, in the miserable, the poor, the fallen and the sinner

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

> life in the service of the Lord, the Lord comes to such hearts. . .

Subjected to a thousand indignities, privations, jeers, insults, was it not surprising that the prisoners could yet find restful sleep at night :

> It is the time when the weak of heart weeps over his misfortune or in anticipation of the hardships of prison life. The lover of God feels the nearness of his deity, and has the joy of his prayer or meditation in the silent night. Then to these three thousand creatures who came from God, victims of a miserable social system, the huge instrument of torture, the Alipur jail, is lost in a vast silence.

The hardships hurt at first, but in the beginning Sri Aurobindo learnt to tolerate them, then to ignore them, and finally to become wholly immune to them. The mind was able to soar above them, even to laugh at them; there could be no anger now, nor resentment; 'twas a Divinity that had shaped the ends, and regrets were wholly out of place.

After the first few difficult and dreary days, Sri Aurobindo was permitted to obtain his clothes and books from home. He accordingly requested his maternal uncle, Krishna Kumar Mitra the editor of the Sanjivani, to send him these—notably the Gita and the Upanishads. It was during that terrible interregnum, when he was cooped up in total loneliness and normal human supports were taken away, that he was able to gauge what effect such solitary confinement could have even on healthy or intelligent people : how such monstrous isolation might—unless God's Grace stood sentinel by one's side—drive one to distraction and lunacy.

There was the other side of the medal too, for there were not wanting officers—like Emerson the Jail Superintendent, Dr. Daly the prison physician and Baidyanath Chatterji the assistant doctor—who were polite, considerate and kindly. There was also a change for the better in the outer circumstances of Sri Aurobindo's life. Dr. Daly—"a gentleman and

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

a most judicious person"—started visiting Sri Aurobindo in his cell daily, along with the Assistant Jail Superintendent, and there was some attempt at conversation; it was largely an one-sided affair though, for Sri Aurobindo was but a listener most of the time, and merely answered their queries. One day Dr. Daly informed Sri Aurobindo that he would be given permission to have a constitutional outside his cell, both in the morning and in the evening. This freedom, which enabled Aurobindo to walk between the jail workshop and the cowshed for anything from ten minutes to two hours, was most welcome, and Sri Aurobindo on those occasions used to recite the soul-stirring verses from the Upanishads or the Gita, to watch the other inmates of the prison engaged in their work, to realise the basic truth of the immanent Godhead, All this is Brahman. But already an inner change was taking place, and it had its effects on his outer experiences as well. We cannot do better than read the Uttarpara speech of over a year later when he took a backward glance at his prison days and reviewed the changes in his mental climate from "dark, dark . . . irrecoverably dark, total eclipse of day" through the tunnel of grim indifference and acceptance and out into the glory and brightness of a Divine morn when the whole world was seen bathed in His translucent light :

> When I was arrested and hurried to the Lal Bazar hajat, I was shaken in faith for a while, for I could not look into the heart of His intention. Therefore I faltered for a moment and cried out in my heart to Him, "What is this that has happened to me? I believed that I had a mission to work for the people of my country and until that work was done, I should have Thy protection. Why then am I here and on such a charge?" A day passed and a second day and a third, when a voice came to me from within, "Wait and see". Then I grew calm and waited, I was taken from Lal Bazar to Alipur, and was placed for one month in a solitary cell apart from men. There I waited night and day for the voice of God within me, to know what He had to say to me, to learn what I had to do. In this seclusion the earliest realisation, the first

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

lesson came to me.

He then remembered how, a month or more before his arrest, an inner call had come to him to put aside all activity —to go into seclusion and look within—so that he might enter into closer communion with Him. On that occasion, however, Sri Aurobindo had beed too weak to resist the pull of the outside world, and he had therefore desisted from listening to that voice; politics and poetry were too dear to him, and he could not give them up completely. Had he not, indeed, told Lele that he, Sri Aurobindo, would follow the path of Yoga only if it did not interfere with his politics and his poetry? So long as he was a free man, Sri Aurobindo would not break the bonds himself—and therefore God, in his own utterly inscrutable manner, had to do it for him. God now seemed to whisper to Sri Aurobindo in the infinite loneliness of the prison cell :

> The bonds you had not the stength to break, I have broken for you, because it is not my will nor was it ever my intention that that should continue. I have had another thing for you to do and it is for that I have brought you here, to teach you what you could not learn for yourself and to train you for my work.

In the vast and sombre stillness of the dungeon, the admonition and the exhortation seemed to insinuate their meaning into his disturbed heart, and it was as though he was enacting the inner spiritual drama so disturbingly described by T. S. Eliot :

> To arrive where you are, to get from where you are not,
> You must go by a way wherein there is no ecstasy. . .
>
> In order to possess what you do not possess. . .

Sri Aurobindo had in the meantime secured his books,—the Upanishads and the Gita. As he began reading the Gita, the Lord's strength entered into him, and he was able to do the sadhana prescribed in the Book. He had already over a period of years tried to seize the true inwardness and glory

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

of the Indian religious and spiritual tradition, the philosophia perennis of the Sanatana Dharma, and intellectually to accept it in its entirety; now it all became, not only a matter of thrilling comprehension, but a fact of minutely intimate realisation. For one thing, there was the stupendous lesson and ineffable experience of Love. As he wrote in the Kara-Kahini :

> The prisoners in the neighbouring cowshed would take out in front of my room the cows for grazing. Both cow and cowherd were daily and delightful sights. The solitary confinement at Alipur was a unique lesson in love. Before coming here, even in society my affections were confined to a rather narrow circle, and the closed emotions would rarely include birds and animals . . . At Alipur I could feel how deep could be the love of man for all created things, how thrilled a man could be no seeing a cow, a bird, even an ant.

Sri Aurobindo also saw by direct illumination the eternal truth of what Sri Krishna had demanded of Arjuna, and what He still demands of all those who wish to be counted among His true servants. . . The constant reading and re-reading of the Gita, and ceaseless pondering on its undying truths, made it possible for him at last to seize in an act of undivided attention "the core of the Gita's teaching", and now the Song of Songs seemed to tell him in friendly insinuating yet marvellously compelling words :

> Desire and the passions that arise from desire are the principle sign and knot of ego. . . . Desire is the chief enemy of spiritual perfection. Slay then desire; put away attachment to the possession and enjoyment of the outwardness of things. Separate yourself from all that comes to you as outward touches and solicitations, as objects of the mind and senses. Learn to bear and reject all the rush of the passions and to remain securely seated in your inner self even while they rage in your members, until at last they cease to affect any part of your nature. Bear and put away similarly the forceful attacks and even the slightest insinuat-

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

uating touches of joy and sorrow. Cast away liking and disliking, destroy preference and hatred, root out shrinking and repugnance. Let there be a calm indifference to these things and to all the objects of desire in all your nature. Look on them with the silent and tranquil regard of an impersonal spirit.

The doubts—the few that had persisted yet in prison—were now a thing of the past; Sri Aurobindo's soul already experienced a calm and rich lucidity. He was now able, while mentally repeating the mantra that all was Brahman, all was Vasudeva —Sarvam khalvidam brahma, Vasudevah sarvamiti—to project that realisation upon everything and every creature in the range of his daily experience. The prison ceased to be a prison. As he opened his wondering eyes, it was an apocalyptic vision that he saw :

> . . . it was while I was walking that His strength again entered into me. I looked at the jail that secluded me from men and it war no longer by its high walls that I was imprisoned; no, it was Vasudeva who surrounded me. I walked under the branches of the tree in front of my cell but it was not the tree, I knew it was Vasudeva, it was Sri Krishna whom I saw standing there and holding over me his shade. I looked at the bars of my cell, the very grating that did duty for a door and again I saw Vasudeva. It was Narayana who was guarding and standing sentry over me. Or I lay on the coarse blankets that were give me for a couch and felt the arms of Sri Krishna around me, the arms of my Friend and Lover. This was the first use of the deeper vision He gave me. I looked at the prisoners in the jail, the thieves, the murderers, the swindlers, and as I locked at them I saw Vasudeva, it was Narayana whom I found in these darkened souls and misused bodies.

Some of the prisoners were but thieves and dacoits, yet how good and how human they seemed to be, how well they seemed to be able to triumph over the adverse circumstances of jail life, how unconsciously they seemed to demonstrate that "sweet are the uses of adversity"! There was, in parti-

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

cular, an alleged dacoit sentenced to ten years' rigorous imprisonment, but to Sri Aurobindo he seemed a saint. As a result of these insights and illuminations, a transcendent peace now possessed Sri Aurobindo's mind and heart, and all was incomparable peace within. This singular immaculate inner equanimity and this miraculous gift of mystical vision helped him to see in the lower court—as in the sessions court as well—all the actors clothed in the garment of Narayana, of Vasudeva :

> I looked and it was not the Magistrate whom I saw, it was Vasudeva, it was Narayana who was sitting there on the bench. I looked at the Prosecuting Counsel. . . it was Sri Krishna who sat there, it was my Lover and Friend who sat there and smiled. "Now do you fear?" He said; "I am in all men and I overrule their actions and their words. My protection is still with you. . .

Incarceration and trial, then, far from breaking Sri Aurobindo, only re-made him in the hallowed mould of God's desire. The prison did not cramp his movements, but proved rather a temple of liberation and fulfilment. As he recapitulated this blissful experience in Kara-Kahini :

> The high wall, those iron bars, the white wall, the green-leaved tree shining in the sunlight, it seemed as if these commonplace objects were not unconscious at all, but that they were vibrating with a universal consciousness, they loved me and wished to embrace me, or so I felt. Men, cows, ants, birds are moving, flying, singing, speaking, yet all is Nature's game; behind all this is a great pure detached spirit rapt in a serene delight. Once in a while it seemed as if God Himself was standing under the tree, to play upon His Flute of Delight; and with its sheer charm to draw my very soul out. Always it seemed as if someone was embracing me, holding me on one's lap. The manifestation of these emotions overpowered my whole body and mind, a pure and wide peace reigned everywhere. . .

There was now neither peril nor shortcoming, but only the soul's utter joy and freedom; and even when he inhabited but

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

an area of about forty-five square feet, he sensed the splendours of the Infinite and learned to lose himself in the "vasts of God".

While thus a great peace reigned within and overflowed without, the preliminary trial went on its meandering course. At first Sri Aurobindo hardly met any of his coaccused. It was at an identification parade in the jail that he first chanced upon his brother, Barindra, after his arrest. It was at a parade too that one Nagendranath Gossain (Goswami) thrust himself upon Sri Aurobindo's attention. Fit and fat and tall and fair, "his eyes spoke of evil propensities". He claimed that his father was clever and influential enough to get him acquitted. After the trial began in the lower court on 19 May, the prisoners found some time to converse, either in the prison van or at tiffin time; otherwise they were kept in separate cells. There were jokes and pleasantries when they were thus occasionally thrown together, but Sri Aurobindo himself was generally taciturn. Gossain, however, would try to edge towards him, and try to make him talk, sometimes popping very suspicious questions. It was now found that the egregious Shams-ul-Alam was occasionally holding secret conversations with Gossain. Soon Gossain himself began saying with some bravado that he was being coaxed by the police to turn "King's approver" but that he was really trying to hoodwink them. On the other hand' his mind hid by now become an open book to the other accused, and they were not a little apprehensive as to what he might do. And when he did give evidence at last, their fears proved only too true.

Whether it was on Dr. Daly's recommendation (as was likely) or at Gossain's suggestion (as he claimed), the prisoners were permitted to live together in the prison—a change not altogether to Sri Aurobindo's liking with his recently acquired taste for solitariness, but which facilitated Gossain's task of moving about and gathering "information". During this period of his stay with the others in a large room, Sri Aurobindo had plenty of opportunities of observing his companions in adversity. Most of them were strangers to him, but he was delighted to see the leaping light in their eyes and their general buoyancy

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

of temperament :

> Looking at these lads. . . one felt as if the liberal, daring, puissant men of an earlier age with a different training had come back to India. That fearless and innocent look in their eyes, the words breathing power, their carefree delighted, even in the midst of great danger the undaunted courage, cheerfulness of mind, absence of despair, or grief, all this was a symptom, not of the inert Indians of those days, but of a new age, a new race and a new activity. If these were murderers, then one must say that the bloody shadow of killing had not fallen across their nature, in which there was nothing at all of cruelty, recklessness or bestiality . . . they passed their days in prison with boyish fun, laughter, games, reading and discussions. Quite early they had made friends with everyone . . . while the trial was going on, and the fate of thirty or forty accused persons was being wrangled over, whose result might be hanging or transportation for life, some of the accused persons without as much as glancing at what was happening around them, were absorbed in reading the novels of Bankimchandra, Vivekananda's Raja Yoga or Science of Religions, or the Gita, the Puranas, or European Philosophy.

As for the way Sri Aurobindo's unruffled demeanour struck the boys, we have the testimony of one of them, Upendranath Bandyopadhyaya, as recorded in his book of reminiscences in Bengali :

> Arabinda would also keep his corner and get lost in his spiritual meditations. Even the hell of the noise that the musical boys made did never disturb or affect him. In the afternoons, he would pace up and down the room, and read the Upanishads or such holy things. . .

They noticed certain changes even in Sri Aurobindo's physical appearance. Although he used no oil, his hair looked shiny, as if it drew fat from the body itself. Once his eyes were set like glass-balls. When one of the boys mustered enough courage to ask him whether he had got anything out of his

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by MoE-IKS-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

spiritual practices, Sri Aurobindo merely answered, "Why, my boy, the thing I looked for!" He had looked for God, and he had seen Him, and he was seeing Him all the time! To queries about the probable outcome of the case, Sri Aurobindo seems to have replied that he would be acquitted, and that, in fact, all their lives would be spared.

There were also certain other encounters and experiences. Sir Edward Baker, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, after a visit to the Alipur Jail where he happened to see Sri Aurobindo, told Charu Chandra Dutt :

> "Have you seen Arabinda Ghose's eyes? He has the eyes of a mad man!", and Dutt had to take great pains to convince Sir Edward that Arabinda wasn't mad at all but was really a true Karma Yogi. There was a more portentous encounter when a Scotch Warder gave an insolent push to Sri Aurobindo when he was about to enter his cell. The boys around naturally got very much excited and might have exploded into violence, but Sri Aurobindo arrested it by giving the miscreant such a look that he instantaneously fled, burned within by the communicated fire of anger. The Jailor presently came upon the scene and, on things being explained to him, pacified everybody and said while going, "We have each to bear our cross".

Of some interest is Sri Aurobindo's experience of fasting once for a period of eleven days in the Alipur Jail. He was able to go through this "ordeal" (as it is usually called) without any great inconvenience, except that he lost ten pounds in weight during the period; and when he terminated the fast, he started taking the usual food again. Sri Aurobindo had also on one occasion the experience of the phenomenon known as "levitation". It was for him a time of intense Sadhana on the vital plane, and at the very moment he asked himself, "Are such things possible?", he found his body raised against the wall without any muscular exertion on his part—only a tip of the body being in slight contact with the ground, and the rest remaining as if suspended precariously!

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

> There are more things in Heaven and Earth, Horatio,
> Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.

An even more significant experience was the sudden opening of a new frontier of his consciousness,—a keen and infallible sensitiveness to painting and sculpture. He was meditating in his cell, and he saw—perhaps with his mind's eye—some pictures, some shapes, on the wall, and it was as though an "Open Sesame!" had thrown the casements open to reveal the splendours in the firmaments of colour, line and form. Was the prison cell, not merely a sanctuary, but a School of Art as well?

Once Sri Aurobindo had come out of the transient Dark and confronted the New Light of Divine Omnipresence, he knew he was beyond the slings and stabs of prison deprivations, bureaucratic perversity and the excruciation of legal proceedings. The sea of silence that had lain under the surface of his consciousness and held him in its vast supernal peace since the day he had stumbled upon it in the upstairs room of Sardar Mazumdar's house at Baroda six months earlier,—it was still there. The great Bass—the immaculate sruti—of the music of his life continued as before. But, after the blissful experience of Narayana Darshan in the Alipur Jail, it was as though a thousand little beautiful ships plied on the sea, it was as though numberless notes swelled and swayed and resounded and reverberated making melodies that charmed the human soul to inhabit the Life Heavens. It was not as though Sri Aurobindo had—by his ready response to love, to beauty, to the grandeur of God in everything—it was not as though Sri Aurobindo had lapsed into worldiness or this-worldliness, that he had tamely surrendered to the attachments, blandishments and entanglements of the world of samsara, the deceptive realm of the dichotomies and dualities. The sea of silence was not lost : the sruti had not snapped—it was not the stirring of the senses, it was the witness-spirit that was now seeing and recognising the truth behind the appearances, the multiplicity of the phenomenal world in their innate God-

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

suffused magnificence. This was really the upper hemisphere of knowledge—the hemisphere of Divine manifestation—and was only complementary to the lower hemisphere of knowledge, the are of immitigable Nirvanic calm. As Sri Aurobindo explained later :

> This is the integral knowledge, for we know that everywhere and in all conditions all to the eye that sees is One, to a divine experience all is one block of the Divine. It is only the mind which for the temporary convenience of its own thought and aspiration seeks to cut an artificial line of rigid division. . . The liberated knower lives and acts in the world not less than the bound soul and ignorant mind but more, . . . only with a true knowledge and a greater conscient power. And by so doing he does not forfeit the supreme unity. . . For the Supreme, however hidden now to us, is here in the world no less than he could be in the most utter and ineffable self-extinction, the most intolerant Nirvana.

The splendid monotary of the blue sky and the gorgeous orange skies of the evening are both valid images of Reality!

Although the bunch of lads accused in the case along with him appeared in Sri Aurobindo's eyes to be a new type of children growing on the Mother's lap, it was the compulsion of fatality that every fine flock should have its black sheep, every Enen its serpent. The young men realised that it was necessary to hush up Judas-Gossain before he could do more mischief, and accordingly one of his fellow accused pretended to want to turn approver too, supplied Gossain with false information which he duly transmitted to the police and made them run many a fool's errand. There was now no doubt at all that Gossain was 'miching mallecho', he meant mischief; he was the sort of person who could "adduce economic and political justifications in support of ruining his companions through treachery". And so, on 31 August, Kanailal Dutt and Satyendra Bose found the chance to kill the wretched Gossain in a narrow alley leading from the jail hospital to the jail gate, and

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

thereby to silence him for ever. At once the little freedom that had been given to the prisoners was now taken away, and once again they were removed to their respective cells. Collected in two instalments the accused numbered forty-four. As for Kanailal and Satyendra, although their audacious action predictably attracted summary punishment a fortnight later, they nevertheless won renown, in Sisirkumar Mitra's words, as "two of the greatest martyrs in the cause of India's liberty, compared by a British paper with Harmodius and Aristogeiton of Greek fame"; and Lajpat Rai wrote in his Autobiography that "a day will come when people will take wreaths of homage to their statues".

Sri Aurobindo was superficially a part of all this ghastly drama, yet not of it; he was one of the undertrial prisoners, yet he seemed, like a star, to stand aloof and above. When he was brought before Mr. Birley on 11 June, "a black ring was distinctly visible around Aurobindo Babu's eyes"; two days later, he "laughed heartily while conversing with his pleaders, only he looked paler than before". In the early part of August, he was reported to be ill in jail. And thus with interesting vicissitudes, which affected different people in different ways, the trial laboriously dragged itself to a conclusion. Mr. Birley had examined 222 witnesses, and recorded the evidence or statements of several of the accused, including the approver. On 19 August, Mr. Birley framed charges against Sri Aurobindo and the others, and the case was now to go to the sessions. Notwithstanding the silencing of Gossain twelve days later, Norton was confident of getting a conviction at the sessions. Sri Aurobindo's sister, Sarojini, therefore made a further appeal for funds to her countrymen to raise the defence fund from Rs. 23,000, where it then stood, to at least Rs. 60,000, the absolute minimum required to organise Sri Aurobindo's defence to match Mr. Norton's prosecution.

In the meantime, the position of the Bande Mataram became shaky owing to the lack of financial support and the withdrawal of Sri Aurobindo from the editorial sanctum. The paper carried on desperately for a time, thanks to the courage and resourcefulness of Shyamsundar Chakravarti,

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Hemendra and Bejoy Chatterjee, but this could not go on for ever. It was decided, therefore, that the paper should die with a bang rather than cease with a whimper, and so "Bejoy Chatterjee was commissioned to write an article for which the Government would certainly stop the publication of the paper". And that was how this great paper that had made history as the flaming standard-bearer of Indian Nationalism went down in blazing colours, fighting till the last.

Wasn't Sri Aurobindo shaken—wasn't he at least disturbed—by the chain of events : the framing of charges, the committal to sessions, the killing of Gossain, the martyrdom of Kanailal and Satyen, the closure of the Bande Mataram? What was the meaning of it all? Weren't blind or evil forces operating, turning everything awry? But no! Sri Aurobindo's faith stood like a rock in the storm. His recently acquired calm remained as a settled thing, and declined to be ruffled any more. What had happened, and what was happening, only called for a spirit of reverence and an attitude of total surrender. The gains of his first weeks in prison—the inner poise and equanimity, the total trust in God, the constant feeling of the Mother's embrace—stood the test of these new difficulties and challenges. In His Will was his peace, and he knew that the Divine Will was working out its inscrutable purposes in its own way :

> There is no event—great or small or even the smallest—from which some good has not accrued. He often fulfils three or four aims through a single event. We frequently see the working of a blind force in the world; accepting waste as part of nature's method, we ignore God's omniscience and find fault with the divine intelligence, The charge is unfounded. The Divine Intelligence never works blindly, there cannot be the slightest waste of His power; rather, the restrained manner in which, through the minimum of means, He achieves a variety of results is beyond the human intelligence. . .

While thus all was felicity within, the world outside continued to be agitated by the imprisonment of Sri Aurobindo

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

and the protracted and sensational trial that made the headlines day after day for weeks, and months, on end. The case commenced in the Alipur Sessions Court on 19 October 1908. Mr. C. P. Beachcroft, the District and Sessions Judge, who tried the case, had been with Sri Aurobindo at Cambridge, and had stood second in Greek while the other—now the accused—had stood first. Beachcroft had now the very unpleasant task of "trying" the caged Sri Aurobindo on a charge of waging war against the King. So dangerous were the accused in the eyes of the panicky Government that they were kept throughout in a cage during the trial, with wire-netting and locking arrangements. Another of his Cambridge contemporaries and class-mates, Ferrar, who was a practising barrister in Malaya, happened to pass through Calcutta at the time, and felt most concerned when he saw Sri Aurobindo in the court-cage. He would have liked to get Sri Aurobindo at least out of the cage, but didn't know how. Everyday as the prison authorities escorted the accused in the prison van from the Jail to the Court Room, Ullaskar Datta used to give a lead to the singing and shouting all along the way.Indifferent to proceedings in the Court where legal wranglings and the examination and cross-examination of an apparently endless succession of witnesses were taking place, the prisoners in their caged isolation used to engage in serious discussions, and on one occasion Sri Aurobindo traced the history of the revolutionary spirit, how Mironow the Russian revolutionary had told Hem Chandra Kanungo in Paris : "We learnt revolutionary methods from the Chinese, who claim they got them from India. How is it, then, that you now come to us for light?"

When the trial at last began, there was—as might have been expected—a tense atmosphere in the Court. Not content with putting the accused into a cage, police with fixed bayonets stood guard everywhere in the Court and its environs, and Mr. Norton himself, the great indefatigable Counsel-in-Chief for the prosecution, found it necessary to keep a five-chambered loaded revolver on his brief throughout the trial. Drama was thus being queered more and more into Elizabethan melod-

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

rama, while the men in the cage were also giving it a half-tragic and a half-farcical touch. For the first few days, a leading Calcutta barrister appeared for Sri Aurobindo and Barindra, but as they couldn't afford the fees he demanded, he soon gave up the case. It was then that Chittaranjan Das—the "Deshabandhu" of a later day—agreed to appear for Sri Aurobindo. It is said that the spirit of Brahmabandhab Upadhyaya, who had died during captivity in the Campbell Hospital, appeared in a dream to Das and told him that he should take up the defence of Sri Aurobindo. Das's mother too seems to have asked him not to hesitate, for his duty lay in taking up the case. Sarojini Ghose and her friends had thus succeeded in avoiding the "sharks" of the legal profession, and they found in Chittaranjan a true Defender of the Faith and a great prophet of the future. At that time, Chittaranjan was known to be a rising criminal lawyer, a sensitive poet, a dedicated patriot, a flaming idealist and an adoring son and servant of the Mother. He came upon the court scene at Alipur, and the prospect brightened up at once for the Defence.

Chittaranjan, although he was not then the power in the legal world that he became soon after, gave his whole heart and soul to the organisation of the Defence, and during the next six months devoted himself day and night to the task, and took practically no fees. It was the discipline of a Titan's labour, it was the ministry of a noble mission. We learn that "in this case 206 witnesses were examined, 4000 documents were filed as exhibits, consisting of bombs, revolvers, ammunition, detonators, fuses, poisonous acids, and other explosive materials, numbered 5000". Poet, visionary, patriot, Chittaranjan had come to his brother poet's defence, put away from him "all other thoughts and abandoned all his practice" and had for months overworked himself and ruined his health—but it was a great cause and it was heroic service of the Mother as well. Not Sri Aurobindo, but the Mother's great and unique son, Her conscience made manifest, Her flaming heart and radiant soul—these were under trial. It was the Divine's working too that, not a gluttonous shark of the profession, not a merely superlatively clever Barrister, but a

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

valiant St. George of the Bar should come forward to give battle to the Dragon.

It is not necessary here to go over the whole exasperating legalistic ground once again. The prosecution, although they moved heaven and earth in order to achieve their object, just couldn't prove their case against Sri Aurobindo. Asked by the Court, Sri Aurobindo had said that he would leave the case entirely to his lawyers; he himself did not wish to make any statement or even to answer the Court's questions. As in Perseus the Deliverer, there was here too the vast invisible struggle between the dark neither forces of the foreign bureaucracy on the one hand and, on the other, the forces of light striving to break into the theatre of Chaos and Old Night and put them to flight. While, like Andromeda lying in chains on the nude high rock, Sri Aurobindo sat in his corner of the exposed cage absorbed in meditation, not listening to the evidence, not attending to the trial; while, in the background, like Poseidon and Pallas Athene the powers of the Bureaucracy and of Nationalism were anxiously awaiting the outcome of the issue; there, in the foreground—like the formidable sea-monster and the bright Sun-God Perseus—the redoubtable Eardley Norton and the young Apollo Chittaranjan fought out the issue between the Old and the New, slavery and freedom, death and life. Norton's massive experience and sheer driving intellectual power met Chittaranjan's jets of emotion and lightning intuitive leaps. Was it Goliath against David, or the Dragon against Perseus? The Alpine edifices of evidence, the superb dialectics, the ruthless browbeatings, the hectorings and the innuendoes, the banterings and the baitings, the legal quibblings and the trained ventriloquisms, all ultimately availed nothing in the face of the clear stream of Ganga that reflected a thousand lights yet flowed majestically, bringing the benediction of success. Much of the dark pillared heights of the prosecution case was eaten up by the gleaming lights from Chittaranjan's Lamp of Defence. It was almost as in the climactic scene in Savitri :

He called to Night but she fell shuddering back,

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

He called to Hell but silently it retirep . . .

His body was eaten by light, his spirit devoured.

The case for the defence simply was that it was perfectly true that Sri Aurobindo had taught the people of India the name and meaning and content of Swaraj or National Independence. If that by itself was a crime, Sri Aurobindo would very willingly plead guilty to the charge. The guilt was writ large in his writings and in his speeches, and he would be prepared to reiterate yet once again that particular "guilt". There was no need at all to bring witness after witness to prove something that the accused himself did not dispute, and wouldn't dream of disputing. If to take the name of Swaraj and to propagate its meaning was to be deemed guilty, he would be ready to suffer to the uttermost for having preached the message of Independence to the people. But let not the prosecution charge Sri Aurobindo with things he had not done, which were in fact repugnant to his whole philosophy and scheme of things. He had taught the people of India how the ideals of democracy and national independence could be translated into reality in terms of Vedantic self-awakening, self-discipline and self-realisation. He had never approved spasmodic terrorist acts, he had never thought that such acts would usher in independence. Sri Aurobindo was a Vedantic Nationalist, not a mere bomb-throwing terrorist.

Chittaranjan's speech for the defence was spread over eight days, and came to be praised universally as an eloquent epic of forensic art. What was Sri Aurobindo's philosophy of action? What was it—in the individual as well as National planes? Just this, affirmed Chittaranjan : Vedantism. Sri Aurobindo was not a politician in the ordinary, Western sense of the term, but a deeply committed person to whom politics was as profoundly spiritual an experience as was religion itself. Elucidating this point, Chittaranjan continued :

As in the case of individuals you cannot reach your God with extraneous aid, but you must make an effort—

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

> that supreme effort—yourself before you can realise the God within you; so also with a nation. It is by itself that a nation must grow; a nation must attain its salvation by its unaided effort. No foreigner can give you that salvation. It is within your own hands to revive that spirit of nationality. That is the doctrine of nationality which Aurobindo has preached throughout, and that was to be done not by methods which are against the trapitions of the country . . . the doctrines he preached are not doctrines of violence but doctrines of passive resistance. It is not bombs, but suffering . . . He says, believe in yourself; no one attains salvation who does not believe in himself. Similary, he says, in the case of a nation.

How Chittaranjan proved that the letter purported to have been written by Barindra to his elder brother Sri Aurobindo was no more thao a forgery—"as clumsy as those Piggott had got up to incriminate Parnell after the murder of Lord Cavendish in Phoenix Park"—is of course among the most thrilling denouements in the history of criminal cases. O Bureaucracy! all that and forgery too? And Sri Aurobindo too must have found a certain grim satisfaction in the parallelism between the two prosecutions—both fathered ultimately by the same imperial Power.

Having thus masterfully demolished what must have initially appeared to be a piece of damning evidence against Sri Aurobindo, Chittaranjan in his memorable peroration—delivered as if he was a man divinely possessed—made a unique appeal to Mr. Beachcroft the Judge and the two Assessors :

> My appeal to you is this, that long after the controversy will be hushed in silence, long after this turmoil, the agitation will have ceased, long after he is dead and gone, he will be looked upon as the poet of patriotism, as the prophet of nationalism and the lover of humanity. Long after he is dead and gone, his words will be echoed and re-echoed, not only in India, but across distant seas and lands. Therefore, I say that the man in his position is not only standing before the bar of this Court, but before the bar of the High

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

G.M. College of Education
Raipur Bantalab
Jammu.
Acc No. 5438
Dated 17.5.03
Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Court of History.

Prophetic words—and more than prophetic words. When the hearing had concluded, the two Assessors returned a unanimous verdict of "Not Guilty" about Sri Aurobindo on 14 April 1909. Three weeks later, on 6 May, accepting the Assessors' verdict, Mr. Beachcroft acquitted Sri Aurobindo.

Of the rest, Barindra and Ullaskar received death sentences; some were exiled to the Andamans for life, some were sentenced to transportation or rigorous imprisonment for several years; and some fifteen, including Nolini Kanta Gupta, were acquitted along with Sri Aurobindo. Presently, C. R. Das appealed to the High Court on behalf of those who had been convicted, and as a result Barindra and Ullaskar had their death sentences commuted into transportation for life. There were other reductions too in course of time, and so they were all permitted to return to normal life before many years passed. But at moment the death sentences were passed, Ullaskar had merely thrown up a sardonic smile and remarked, "Thank God, this damn'd show is ended after all". They had all aspired nobly, dared greatly, lived dangerously, and they were able also—at life's extremity—to laugh at death. Although it is not to our purpose here to follow the fortunes of the various accused in later years, two of them at least deserve more than a passing mention. Of Barindra, the brain and heart of the Manicktolla enterprise, Mr. Norton himself said while introducing a book on the trial :

> The ringleader was a young man of unusual qualities. No lawyer can defend his action; no statesman applaud it. None the less, Barindra Kumar Ghose was sincere, and in a great measure chivalrous.

Ullaskar, as a college student, had thrashed his professor, one Mr. Russell, for having spoken deprecatingly of the Bengalis. He had then joined the Manicktolla group and started making bombs. Love of the Motherland was a consuming passion with him, and nothing else mattered. Like Barin

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Ullaskar too spent ten or more years in the Andamans, and that must have affected both body and mind. "But this, after all, was part of the ritual of sacrifice", says Nolini, and concludes with Barin's defiant words : "Such indeed was the vow in this kind of marriage". Barin and Ullaskar and the rest of those young men who suffered prison life at Alipur for a year and some more years undergoing their sentences were all children of the Mother born with a feeling of tragic fatality. They counted not the cost of patriotism, they didn't compromise and prevaricate to buy freedom at the cheapest market, they didn't put comfort and security and quickest getting on in life above single-minded service of the Mother. If they were "misguided", they paid the penalty for it. But what at this distance of time cries to be remembered is that those young men, parched with the thirst for freedom, couldn't go into nice prudential calculations but sought the drink that came handy—resolute action regardless of consequences. They could both sing exultingly this chorus and also live in the light of its uncompromising code :

A day indeed has dawned,
When a million hearts
Have known not to fear
And leave no debts unpaid.
Life and death are
Bondslaves at our feet;
Our hearts have forgotten to care.

While still in the Alipur Jail (the Government Hotel at Alipur, as Sri Aurobindo once humorously called it), he had written a number of articles with titles such as 'The Morality of the Bomb', 'The Psychology of the Bomb' and 'The Policy of the Bomb', and these had been sent out of the prison through a friend. But he too was afraid that police might seize the articles, and so he put them in a piece of hollow bamboo and buried it in the earth; when he dug up the bamboo later, the papers were found to have been eaten away by white ants. A better fate, however, overtook some of the poetic compositions

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

of this period. The experience of Divine manifestion in everything and everybody was a new ground of realisation. But he had reached this spot only by battering his way through thorns and brambles, defying hazards and dieting on difficulties :

With wind and the weather beating round me
Up to the hill and the moorland I go.
Who will come with me? Who will climb with me?
Wade through the brook and tramp through the snow?
Not in the petty circle of cities
Cramped by your doors and your walls I dwell;
Over me God is blue in the welkin,
Against me the wind and the storm rebel.

In another poem, The Mother of Dreams, written in long lines of linked sweetness and interior double-rhymes, Sri Aurobindo's Muse rides triumphantly on the crest of a complicated rhythm and achieves a memorable articulation in eloquent praise of the Mother—"the home-of-all, the womb-of-all", in Hopkins's suggestive phrase—who in myriad ways manifests Herself to terrestrial men and women. What visions are these that visit us as we are lapped in grey, soft and restful slumber? What sights, what sounds are these, what are these images, what is this bliss profound,—what are these intimations that thus implicate us in their grandeur and in their impenetrable and ineluctable mystery? Sri Aurobindo's imagination and his spiritual fervour weave a velvet magic about these meandering and soul-enchanting lines, and the poem itself is a dream-world of incommunicable beauty and felicity. One must read and chant the whole poem slowly, for it is endowed with something of the mantra sakti of the revealed word, and once we surrender ourselves to the magic of its rhythmic sound, we find easy entrance into the deathless world of its mystic harmony. We can quote the concluding lines here, as powerful a piece of utterance as any in the whole body of Sri Aurobindo's poetry :

Doors have flung wide in the chambers of pride where the

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

gods reside and the Apsaras dance in their circles faster and faster.

For thou art she whom we first can see when we pass the bounds of the mortal,

There at the gates of the heavenly states thou hast planted thy wand enchanted over the head of the Yogin waving.

From thee are the dream and the shadows that seem and the fugitive lights that delude us;

Thine is the shade in which visions are made; sped by thy hands from celestial lands come the souls that rejoice for ever.

Into thy dream-worlds we pass or look in thy magic glass, then beyond thee we climb out of Space and Time to the peak of divine endeavour.

From the fullness of such poetic recordation, it is surely sacrilege to detract anything, and mere exegesis must only end in such detraction. Suffice for us to know that Sri Aurobindo had become, while cooped up supposedly in petty space, the sort of man who could peep into Infinity and render its untranslatable wonders in streams of such vibrant melody. Stone walls made no prison to him, nor iron grating a cage; for a soul enfranchised as his, the dungeon was very hermitage, and his soul moved unhorizoned with angel-wings and glimpsed the Lord in everything. There is a sovereign sense of bareness in the shorter poem, and there is a like sovereign suggestion of richness and magnificence in the second—but both partake of the Bliss of Brahman in the infinite manifestations of the Divine play. Sri Aurobindo has safely come through the devouring coils of adverse circumstance; he has baffled the sudden intrusion of the Everlasting No and affirmed the incandescent hues of the Everlasting Yea. He has ceased to be a "traveller between life and death", and he has become instead a Pilgrim of Eternity.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

4

The Debate

The age of classical oratory had passed. With the consolidation of the colonies the Hon'ble Members of the British Parliament, belonging to either side, treasury or opposition, had become cautious in their delivery. After all, common interest was a reality even in the House of Commons!

The World Wars, of course, altered the situation. Transactions became lively again. But the evaluation of a debate in the first decade of the century must be done keeping in mind the quiescent spirit of the time. And in this light the first debate on India in the 'new Parliament', in 1910, was almost revolutionary!

And this debate was on Sri Aurobindo.

It was not for the first time that Sri Aurobindo featured in the House of Commons (in the said debate that took place on the 28th April 1910). On August 5, 1909, Mr. J.D. Rees had asserted that although deporting without trial was autocratic, the Government should deport Sri Aurobindo as he commanded a great sway on the youths. 'In order to make the people of the East realise that their rulers had power it was essential to use it autocratically in grave and critical situations.'

But Sri Aurobindo had his admirers among the most worthy parliamentarians of the time. On he 5th tOctober 1909,

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

on behalf of Sir Henry Cotton, Mr. Keir Hardie, the celebrated founder of the Labour Party, asked the Under Secretary of State whether his attention has been called to the fact that the speeches of Mr. Arabindo Ghose were laid before the court as evidence against him in the Alipore Conspiracy Case; that the judge who tried that case took those speeches into his consideration and declared in his judgment that those speeches in themselves seemed to advocate nothing more than the regeneration of his country, and that Mr. Ghose was acquitted; and whether having regard to these facts His Majesty's Government will direct the release of Mr. Kolhatkar, who has been sentenced to 15 months' hard labour for republishing the speeches of Mr. Ghose in his newspaper?

The Master of Elibank : The charge against the person referred to was that he disseminated seditious matter. It was tried by an Indian judge. The sentence was taken on appeal to the highest Court of Appeal in the province. That court upheld the conviction but reduced the sentence. An obiter dictum by the Sessions Judge in the Alipore Conspiracy Case who was careful to state that he was not concerned with the question whether a charge of sedition could be laid at Mr. Ghose's door in respect of his speeches, is not relevant in regard to the decision of a judge of equal rank in Nagpur, upheld, so far as the establishment of the charge of sedition was concerned, by the highest tribunal of the province.

Mr. Mackarness : Is it not a fact that the sedition referred to consists solely of perpetuating certain speeches which have been held to be non-seditious?

Mr. Rees : May I ask the Hon'ble Member whether the gentleman who made that speech is not a notorious enemy of the British rule and the British administration?

But these references were only a prulude to the storm that Mr. Ramsay MacDonald (soon afterwords the leader of the Labour Party and later the first Labour Prime Minister of

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Britain) called in during April, 1910.

7 April 1910

Mr. MacDonald asked the Under Secretary of State for India "whether he can confirm or otherwise the report in this morning's Times that a warrant has been issued against Mr. Aurobindo Ghose for an article which appeared in the Karmayogin of 25th December, and whether, if the report be accurate, a copy of the paper can be placed in the Library for the information of Members?"

The Under Secretary of State for India (Mr. Montagu) : "The Secretary of State has seen the announcement in The Times; but has no official information on the subject. He has telegraphed to India for a full report."

14 April 1910

Mr. Ramsay MacDonald asked the Under Secretary for India if a warrant has been issued against Mr. Aurobindo Ghose for an article which appeared in the Karmayogin on 25th December; whether have been issued against publishers of the paper as well; if so under what law these warrants have been issued; and whether a copy of the paper containing the offending article can be placed in the Library for the information of Members?

Mr. Rees : Before the Hon. Gentleman answers may I inquire if the seatless syndicate which supplies these questions has not shown that it has no desire that seditious persons should be brought to justice?

Mr. Ramsay MacDonald : Quite apart from the meaning of the adjective, the offensiveness of the question is perfectly apparent, and I want to know whether any Hon. Member is allowed to characters the questions of another Hon. Member in this way?

Mr. Rees : I withdraw the word 'seatless' if it gives offence. I meant, of course, that they had no seats in the house.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

The Under Secretary of State : The answer to the first part of my Hon. Friend's question is in the affirmative. The Secretary of State is not aware of the issue of any other warrants in this matter, and he is informed that the warrant for the arrest of Mr. Ghose has been issued under Section 124a, Indian Penal Code. I may add that considerable delay occurs just now in obtaining information, and I must ask my Hon. Friend to exercise some patience in the matter while the fullest information is being procured. At the present time the Secretary of State would rather not commit himself to the undertaking asked for in the last part of the question.

Mr. Rees asked, "Whether the Secretary for India will consider the propriety of placing in the Library copies of the Last Will and Testament of still-surviving Aurobindo Ghose for whose arrest a warrant is said to have been issued in India and copies of the numerous issues of the newspaper, for which he is responsible, containing articles hostile to British rule and British officials in India and encouraging sedition?"

Mr. Montagu : The Secretary of State cannot accede to my Hon. Friend's request. He must not, however, be taken to accept his description of writings the character of which is a subject for trial.

Mr. MacDonald asked the question on Sri Aurobindo on 26th April, again. Mr. Montagu replied : "The Secretary of State is not yet in a position to add anything to the answer given" on 14 April. Mr. MacDonald repeated his question on 28th April.

Mr. Montagu : I have already informed the Hon. Member that proceedings are being taken against Mr. Ghose by the Government of Bengal, under Sec. 124a of the Indian Penal Code. We have no knowledge of any proceedings against the printer of his paper. The full text of the subject matter of the prosecution has not yet reached the Secretary of State. To act on my Hon. Friend's sugges--

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

tion would not only mean a departure from the practice of avoiding the advertisement of literature alleged to be seditious, but would almost inevitably lead to a result which, I am sure, my Hon. Friend would be the first to deprecate—the prejudging, one way or the other, of a case that must be decided on an Indian court of law.

Mr. MacDonald : "I rise to draw the attention of the House to a matter which seems to me of considerable public importance. On the 7th of this month a statement appeared in The Times that a warrant had been issued against Mr. Aurobindo Ghose for an article which he wrote in Karmayogin on the 25th December last. I immediately approached the India Office to allow me to put a question without notice, in order to get information, but I was told by the Under Secretary at that time that they had no information. I was requested to repeat the question. I have done so 3 times and today it having been put for the 4th time all the information I have been able to get is that this warrant has been issued under Section 124a of the Indian Penal Code.

"My Hon'ble friend, in answering my question today, he could state nothing in regard to the case because that would be to pre-judge it. I respectfully differ from that opinion and I ask whether it would be possible for the India Office to put in the Library a copy of this paper for the information of the Members. I have never asked the India Office to express any opinion on the issue of the warrant. I have never asked for even any expressions of opinion in regard to that article. I have never suggested that the India Office should in any way take sides either with the officials in India or with Mr. Gurobindo Ghose."

He then expressed his deep concern about the type of the official mind that is dealing with the exceedingly delicate situation in India. He continued :

"I have myself received, in the ordinary course of my

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Indiun post, during at least the last three weeks, newspapers, each one of which stated that Mr. Aurobindo Ghose was at a certain place and each one of the statements agreed. It is perfectly well known, he has left what we call in this country the public life. He has left the cares and concerns of the material affairs of the universe and has gone into retirement to make his peace with the Eternal.

"It is known what he is doing, and yet this warrant, issued, according to The Times, on 5th or 6th April, is still undelivered. Nothing apparently has happened."

Mr. MacDonald then traces the birth of the Section 124a, analyses it and then explains how the term sedition has a very broad meaning for the officials. In course of his speech, he is obliged to retort Mr. Rees twice.

Then he presents an outline of Sri Aurobindo's life, as he had understood it!

"Mr. Aurobindo Ghose is practically an Englishman . . . When he was still a baby almost, he was brought over into this country, and he was educated in Manchester. From Manchester he came to St. Paul's School in London and from there he went to Cambridge, and whilst he was at that place he passed into the Indian Civil Service, but was disqualified becuse he could not ride. He then went to India and from the Gaekwar of Baroda he received an appointment at the High School of Baroda, an admirable institution which anybody who goes to Baroda will see and examine with the geatest satisfaction."

Mr. MacDonald then tries to present a brief analysis of the development of Sri Aurobindo's ideas and observes :

"He goes back to India and makes several reflections on the Indian Government and makes criticism on its action and is immediately put down in the black-books of the Indian officials, and is regarded either as a sedition-monger or as a man who ought to be watched. I am giving currency to no

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

secret; it is a current report that as a matter of fact this man after having been tried on an accusation that might have cost his life and having been acquitted by a judge who uses language which he who runs may read—this man having been brought before the court and acquitted, according to common and self-informed reports, it was actually discussed whether his name should be put among the list of men to be deported without trial under the Section of which we heard so much last session.

"I am speaking what is common report in India, but of course, the proceedings are never published. I wish, they were, and I should be very glad if my Hon. Friend today were going, in answer to anything I have said, to tell me that what took place on the consideration of the report of the nine deportees, plus the case of Mr. Aurobindo Ghose, was going to be published. I should be the most delighted man in this House. But there it is, he has been put in the suspected list, and there is not a single thing that he does but is twisted and misrepresented. Even as a matter of fact—and this is my own version of the issue of the warrant—when he retires from public life to private life, although that again was known, and although all his friends said it was imminent, and although he himself practically told me when I saw him that he would not be very much longer in the affairs of the world and engaged in journalistic work—when that step was taken, and he did retire, it was apparently regarded by the Government of Bengal as a move in some deep-seated hidden political plot, and that was the thing which causes the issue of the warrant—at any rate that is my theory.

"What is this article about which so much has been said?. My Hon. Friend has not been able to furnish me with a copy. I have it myself. The Karmayogin is a paper published once a week, and up till quite recently Mr. Aurobindo Ghose edited it. I have the complete article, but I only propose to read two main sections of it. They indicate what was in Mr. Aurobindo Ghose's mind, and they indicate the character of his offence, so far as it was an offence. This is the key-

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

sentence in the whole article :

> 'If the nationalists stand back any longer, either the national movement will disappear or the void created will be filled up by a sinister and violent activity. Neither result can be tolerated by men desirous of their country's development and freedom.'

"Surely, to any man who reads this article as it was meant to be read the meaning of that sentence is perfectly clear, and Mr. Aurobindo Ghose, as is perfectly well known by those who have followed his actions and his writings, sincerely believes that the nationalist movement of which he is the head for the time being at any rate, or was till quite recently, is the one guarantee that there shall be no violence done in India and he blames the officials who have suppressed the free expression of Nationalist sentiment for the unfortunate circumstances which have led to murder and death and executions which everyone deplores."

Mr. J. King : May I ask in a friendly way whether this article is published in Bengali, and whether Mr. Aurobindo Ghose is not a Bengali?

Mr. Ramsay MacDonald : The article is in the most excellent English. There is not a line of Bengali in the whole of it except the date of this issue and its own title. Mr. Aurobindo Ghose could no more write an article in Bengali than I could.

"The second extract which will give an idea of the article is this :

> 'Fear of the law is for those who break the law. Our aims are great and honourable, free from stain and reproach. Our methods are peaceful though resolute and strenuous. We shall not break the law, and therefore we need not fear the law.'

"Then he turns to comment on certain things on which comments have been made again in the official Blue Books.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

'But if a corrupt Police, unscrupulous officials or a partial judiciary—'

"that, of course is not justified by the Blue Books, but it is a matter of common discussion in India—

'Make use of the honourable publicity of our political methods to harass the men who stand in front by illegal ukases, suborned and perjured evidence or unjust decisions, shall we shrink from the toll that we have to pay on our march to freedom? Shall we cower behind a petty secrecy of dishonourable inactivity? We must have our associations, our organisations, our Means of propaganda and if these are suppressed by arbitrary proclamations we shall have done our duty by our Motherland and not on us will rest any responsibility for the madness which crushes down open and lawful political activity in order to give a desperate and sullen nation into the hands of those fiercely enthusiastic and unscrupulous forces that have arisen among us inside and outside India.'

"There is a strong, sincere and effective criticism and condemnation of the practices which have been disgracing the extreme left movement in India during the last year or so. The gentleman of infamous associations who lodges in Paris and tries to stir up the youth of this country and India has had no stronger opponent and no more effective counteracting influence than Mr. Aurobindo Ghose in his attempt to say honestly, and fearlessly, but yet lawfully and fairly. what he feels about the administration of our officials in India. As I said at the ceommencement I had no desire to raise this question. I know perfectly well that the state of India at present moment is very difficult and a very dangerous one, and those who are best qualified to form a judgment about what may happen are perhaps more pessiistic than those who are less qualified to form that judgment. But I feel perfectly certain that unless the India Office will insist upon its officials administering India with some generosity, some catholicity of sentiment and some serious attempt to associate with themselves men like Mr.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Aurobindo Ghose, the future is going to be very much darker than it at present is . . . "

Mr. MacDonald proceeds to give an account of the Indian situation as he reads it.

Mr. Keir Hardie : My Hon. Friend has dealt so fully with Mr. Aurobindo Ghose that the matter need not be farther dwelt upon, but the House may be reminded once again that Mr .Aurobindo Ghose has alredya been the victim of one very exhaustible trial. It came to a close on the 6th May of last year, when Mr. C.B. Beachcroft who tried the case, delivered a very lengthy judgment. One of the difficulties in India is the paucity of informations supplied to the public of the country concerning Indian affairs and the acts of the Indian Administration. Everything that tells against the Indian people is blazed forth, and matters which might tell in their favour do not receive anything like the same publicity. Mr. Beachcroft, after a very lengthy and exhaustive trial, found that Mr. Aurobindo Ghose has not been guilty of any offence known to the law of India. The law of Inoia casts its net now-a-days at least very wide indeed. Mr. Beachcroft described Mr. Aurobindo Ghose as

> 'a man who seems to have an extraordinary hold over the affections of his countrymen.'

"And he added these words :

> 'It is freely admitted for Mr. Aurobindo Ghose that his ideal is independence but the attainment of it is to be reached by passive resistance and by educating the people to stand by themselves; and counsel for the crown admits that there is nothing wrong in cherishing such an ideal, provided it is not sought by violent methods.'

"Counsel was forced to admit on that occasion that the ideal of national independence with Mr. Aurobindo Ghose advocated was in itself neither seditious nor wrong, provided

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

the methods taken to attain the idea were not in themselves violent or criminal. The judge proceeded, after hearing all the evidence to say :

'Now not a single article has been pointed to me—'

"And this applied to the written articles and speeches made by Mr. Aurobindo Ghose,

'which suggests the use of violence.'

"Because of that Mr. Aurobindo Ghose was acquitted. My Hon. Friend, the Member for Leicester (Mr. MacDonald) has quoted several statements from the articles on which, we understand, the fresh warrant is being issued, but there is one quotation which I should like to read to the house because it appears to be the real gravamen of the charge which the Government of India is now about to make against Mr. Aurobindo Ghose. After describing the ideals of the Nationalist Party and the movement against the present regime, Mr. Aurobindo Ghose proceeds :

'These are the objects for which we have to organise the national strength of India. On us falls the burden, in us alone there is the moral ardour, faith and readiness for sacrifice, which can attempt and go far to accomplish the task. But the first requisite is the organisation of the Nationalist Party. I invite that party in all the great centres of the country to take up the work and assist the leaders who will shortly meet to consider steps for the initiation of Nationalist activity. It is desirable to establish a Nationalist Council and hold a meeting of the body in March or April of the next year. It is necessary also to establish Nationalist Associations throughout the country. When we have done this, we shall be able to formulate our programme and assume our proper place in the political life of India.'

"Here we have a movement which is admitted not to be associated with violence, which admittedly is animated by

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

a high patriotic and moral ideal—a movement which claims the attention of the young enthusiasts of India to prevent them from being led into those devious courses into which some of them, unfortunately, have lately been tempted, and the Government, seeing the growth of this movement, apparently wish to stifle it, or, by threatening the prosecution of Mr. Aurobindo Ghose, to hint to others like-minded with himself that every attempt to carry out a conference and to organise that force will be encountered with all the rigours of the law.

(After a little while during which the House was counted.)

"I hope the Under Secretary of State for India when he comes to make his statement, will be able to assure us this organisation and the Nationalist conference on the line of Mr. Aurobindo Ghose's teaching will not be prevented by means taken to intimidate Mr. Aurobindo Ghose."

Mr. Keir Hardie then gave illustrations of some Police atrocities in India.

"A more recent case, which has a direct bearing upon that of Aurobindo Ghose is that of Mr. A. B. Kolhatkar, who held degrees from the University of Madras, and was editor of a paper which published some reports and speeches by Mr. Aurobindo Ghose and translations of his articles. This man was charged with the dissemination of sedition, and was sentenced to 15 months' imprisonment for the offence. The interesting fact to be borne in mind here is that when Mr. Aurobindo Ghose was being tried for his speeches the judges decided that they were not seditious, and yet this man who was simply charged with publishing the speeches which the judges had declared not to be seditious, was convicted of sedition and was actually sentenced to 15 months' imprisonment. He was kept in Nagpur gaol for five and half months in a solitary cell. I understand that the I.P.C. lays it down that no one can be

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

kept for longer than seven days at a time in a solitary cell; but this man was kept in one for five and half months, and during that period his weight went down from 135 lbs. to 103 lbs. He was loaded with chains, and on one occasion was seen by some medical men being removed from one prison to another, and he was so weak and his chains were so heavy that he had to stoop at every step and lift the chains from the ground to enable him to make any step forward at all. I want to ask why it is that political prisoners are treated in this fashion? In this country it is admitted that the political prisoner is entitled to and he receives better treatment and only the other day the Home Secretary, to the great pleasure of most of the members of this House announced that in future further special privileges would be granted to all prisoners who were not guilty of sordid crimes. If that be the case, surely we are entitled to ask that a similar law should be applied to political prisoners in India."

Mr. Keir Hardie thereafter described the Midnapore case where four youths were arrested for their involvement in bombs and Police resorted to wrongful treatment of them and ultimately they were released and brought cases against the Police. He then asked why the Congress Conferences at Faridpur, Mymansingh and Barisal have been banned.

Under Secretary of State (Mr. Montagu) : This is, I think, the first occasion on which this parliament has had to discharge one of its most important duties, namely, the discussion of Indian affairs. It would appear that both the attack and the defence of the Government of India came from this side, the only part of the House which appears eager to discharge that duty. When I look upon the row of eager, interested faces opposite me I find it difficult to realise the Imperial mission of the Conservative Party . . .

"I should be, I think my Hon. Friends will believe, the last to deprecate a discussion such as that which has taken

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

place now. It is absolutely essential that the Assembly which forms the only link between the Government of India and the people of this country, upon whom in the last resort the responsibility for the government of that country lies—I refer to the link afforded by this House of Commons and the House of Parliament—should always be ready to criticise, to question and to defend the action of those officials who represent it in India. I do not complain of most of what the two Hon. Members who have spoken on this side have said, but, if they will both forgive me for saying it, I like their perorations better than their facts. But I do find ground for complaint in the precise moment which my Hon. Friend, the Member of Leicester (Mr. Ramsay MacDonald) has chosed to launch upon the treatment of sedition in India and his basing it upon the case of Aurobindo Ghose. I had occasion to refer this morning to an occurrence in this house when the Hon. Member for Louth put a question on the paper dealing with the trial of a Goble Lord for bigamy. The trial had not yet been begun, and on being called on to put his question, the Hon. Member said :

'I understand, Mr. Speaker, you have expressed a view adverse to the putting of this question, as the trial is pending; therefore I do not propose to put it.' "Mr. Speaker replied :

'I am glad that the Hon. Member has taken that course, because, I think, it is a question calculated to prejudice the trial.'

"I hope my Hon. Friend will forgive me for saying—"

Mr. Ramsay MacDonald : I consulted the Speaker on this point.

Mr. Montagu : I hope the Hon. Member for Leicester will forgive me for saying that I think a large part of his arguments, referring to Mr. Aurobindo Ghose, is likely, one way or the other, to prejudice the proper administration of

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

justice under the Indian law. Let me tecite to the House, shortly the facts in relation to this case. On 25th December an article was published in a newspaper called the Karmayogin and the tone of that article was brought to the notice of the law officers of the Government of Bengal, the Advocate General, the Legal Remembrancer and the Standing Counsel, who is an Indian lawyer. The opinion of those law officers was that the article was of such a nature as to render the writer liable to prosecution under Section 124a of the I.P.C. The Hon. Member for Leicester did not read it. I propose to read the Section to the House :

'Whoever by word either spoken or written, or by signs or by visible representation, or otherwise, brings or attempts to bring into hatred or contempt or excites or attempts to excite disaffection towards His Majesty or the Government established by law in British India, shall be punished with transportation for life or any shorter term, to which a fine may be added, or by imprisonment which may extend to three years, to which a fine may be added, or by a fine.'

The law officers of the Government of Bengal considered that the tone of the article was such that it came within the meaning of the words of that Section. The Code of Criminal Procedure, Section 196 lays it down that no prosecution under this section may be instituted without the sanction of the local government. The Government of Bengal, having the sanction of their law officers before them, accepted it, and sanctioned the prosecution of Mr. Aurobindo Ghose who was believed to be the writer in question.

Mr. Ramsay MacDonald : It was signed.

Mr. Montagu : There were certain difficulties in obtaining legal and technical proof of the authorship, and so the issue of the warrant for Mr. Ghose's arrest was delayed until the beginning of this month. That warrant has not yet been executed, because Mr. Ghose's whereabouts are unknown. The Hon. Member for Leicester, on private

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

information of his own, culled, I gather, from newspapers, has been more fortunate than the police officers who are called upon to execute the warrant.

Mr. Ramsay MacDonald : May I remind the Hon. Member that I have put all the information at his disposal.

Mr. Montagu : Precisely. I presume the same information is available to the Government of India. At the same time it is not always possible to effect the arrest of somebody wanted by the police. I have no doubt that every effort is being made and that at any moment Mr. Ghose may be arrested; but the latest information I have is that Mr. Ghose has at present succeeded in evading arrest. Anyhow, a warrant in the name of the King Emperor for the arrest of Mr. Ghose has been issued by the Chief Presidency Magistrate in Bengal, with the consent and the advice of the Government of Bengal and their Law Officers. Immediately that warrant is issued, I contend that the question whether it should or should not have been issued, whether the article was or was not seditious, rests entirely with Courts of Justice in India. It is not a matter for this House to decide. It is not a matter for any Member of this House to express an opinion upon at this moment. If the Hon. Member for Leicester is wrong, Mr. Ghose, having been tried by the Chief Presidency Magistrate in Calcutta, with full rights of appeal to the two judges of the High Court of Justice, will be properly punished. If, on the other hand, my Hon. Friend is right and the article is not seditious, Mr. Ghose will be acquitted and then will be the Hon. Member's opportunity for challenging the action of the Government of Bengal, and, if he likes, of the Imperial Government and, if he likes, the Secretary of State for India. But when an action is being tried, when a charge is pending, not only would it be improper to express an opinion on the article forming the subject, but, I submit, it will be highly improper to place before this House any information merely intended to give an opportunity for expressing an opinion about a subject in which

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

I suggest, with all humility, it has no right to interfere at the moment, and to interfere in which would be for the House to do that very thing Hon. Members below the Gangway are always asserting we should not do, namely, calling in the Executives to interfere with the Judicial in India . . .

If I may ask the House to leave Mr. Ghose where he is and not to usurp the functions of the Indian Courts of Justice, I would only pause to say in conclusion one other word as to the difficulty of discussing matters of this kind. I do not desire to follow the Hon. Member for Leicester or the Hon. Member for Merthyr Tydvil (Mr. Keir Hardie) in exonerating from all blame a gentleman who has still to stand his trial by a judicial court, nor do I desire to say anything derogatory to a man whom my Hon. Friend has rightly described as having great influence in India and being well known for his high education, and eloquent writings, a sample of which my Hon. Friend read to the House. But no sooner does a case like this come up for discussion, than my Hon. Friend, quoting a statement relating to the gentleman in question, allows the House to assume that such quotations are correct and accurate and then I am saddled with the choice either of leaving that impression on the House, or running the risk of saying something, which I desire to avoid, to the detriment of Mr. Ghose. I will give the House an example. Once again the judgment of Mr. Beachcroft for trial, not for sedition at all, but for conspiracy to use bombs, has been quoted as showing how innocent of all evil effort and intention Mr. Ghose must be taken to be. Mr. Ghose was acquitted of any share in any conspiracy to use bombs or of any charge to wage war against the King; but he was not on trial for sedition, and Mr. Beachcroft definitely and deliberately refused, in words which I could quote, to express any opinion as to whether a charge for sedition could or could not be based upon some of Mr. Ghose's teachings and writings. Therefore the punishment of a man for publishing speeches which had been declared by a Judge of the Sessions Court to be innocent falls absolutely to the ground. I venture to say with all respect that

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

that conclusion and that inaccuracy are only an example of many others in the long speech which the Hon. Member made to the House."

Thereafter Mr. Montagu went on to defend the prohibition of meetings and referred to the Midnapore episode. Mr. Keir Hardie intervened at times. Then Mr. J.D. Rees belonging to the Conservative Party stood up and after expressing his surprise that sensible men like Mr. Mac-Donald should place more trust on his Indian informations than on what his own countrymen say, observed :

> Mr. Rees : I was amused at the suggestion that because Aurobindo Ghose has become religious that therefore he has washed his hands free of mundane affairs, and no longer persists in his former work. Had the Hon. Member for Leicester the most elementary acquaint nce with the elements of Indian conditions, he would know that there is no better platform for carrying out an intrigue than the platform that Aurobindo Ghose has now chosen. I do not speak positively, but I think that another Indian, Sivajee, who really made something like an Indian nationality, became a religious mendicant, and I have no doubt that during that time he was as busy with his post as my Hon. Friend the Member for Leicester is with the letters he receives from members of Indian societies. I do not consider it proper to comment upon what was written by Aurobindo Ghose for the good reasons given by the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, but I say this, that Aurobindo Ghose was distinguished not only for his literary ability, but distinguished above all things for his hostility to British rule in India, and to our fellow countrymen and that has been sufficient to secure for him the sympathy in certain quarters which has led some Members to espouse his cause.
>
> I was also astonished to hear the Hon. Member for Leicester lay down so crudely that the British Government, in ruling 300,000,000 people, if i should, itself be governed by a

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

small band of English-educated Hindus. I have never heard that position so boldly stated, and I hope Members of the House have not failed to notice it. . .

21 February 1911

Mr. O'Grady asked : whether the publisher of the Karmayogin was prosecuted for issuing the article by Mr. Aurobindo Ghose, for writing which a warrant was issued against Mr. Ghose; whether that trial resulted in the acquittal of the publisher on the ground that the article was not seditious; and whether the Government has now withdrawn the warrants issued in connection with this article?

Mr. Montagu : The answer to the first part of my Hon. Friend's question is, Yes; to the second, Yes; and to the third, Yes.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

5

Alipur Conspiracy Case

May it please your honour, and gentlemen assessors,—it is a matter of congratulation for us all, that at last this trial has come to a close. It is especially a matter of congratulation for the prisoners at the bar because they have been in Jail for the best part of a year and the time has now come, gentlemen, for you to consider the evidence which has been placed before you to find out whether the charges brought against them by the prosecution are true or not. I shall have to deal with the evidence in this case at some length but before I do that I must draw your attention to certain features of this case which are very unusual. I believe Mr. Birley said in his evidence that he took special, or rather unusual interest in this case because it was an unusual case and you will find throughout the evidence in this case that it has been conducted on very unusual lines. I am not referring to what has taken place here so much as to what took place before the committing Magistrate, before the case came here. The seeds were sown there, you will find that Mr. Birley made up his mind to try this case on the 3rd May, the accused persons being arrested on suspicion. The evidence is that the police connected some of the accused at any rate with bombs and with conspiracy; whether that evidence is true or false is another matter. It is their version that on the 2nd May these accused persons were arrested on suspicion and taken to the thana and kept in the lock-up. They were not produced before the Magistrate at all unless of course they say the Commissioner of Police is a

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Magistrate. We find on the 3rd May Mr. Birley made up his mind to try the case. They were produced before him on the 4th May. We find that Mr. Birley went to the house of a Police officer—a very high official no doubt—and there he read some of the confessions alleged to have been made by the accused persons to the Police. I say this is an unusual feature, a feature we have not come across in any case in any Court before now. Having done that what does he do ? On the 4th May some of the accused persons were produced him. He forthwith proceeded to examine them. The case for the prosecution is that he recorded the confessions of these accused under a particular section of the Code. With regard to that I shall deal later and you will find from those questions put by Mr. Birley that his object of enquiring was as to what other persons were implicated in certain things. That is done on the 4th May. On the 3rd May he makes up his mind to try this case, on the 4th May the accused is brought before him and before a scrap of evidence is placed before him—he proceeded to take the statement of the accused personally putting questions and recording their answers. After that you will find that he dealt with the applications for bail; a great many were put in—almost all the accused one by one made an application. They were all rejected. Later on May 18th evidence began before Mr. Birley with the examination of Mr. Frizoni. On that day you find objections were taken to his jurisdiction. You find the next day Mr. Birley in the order-sheet is referring to his order of the 3rd May to show how he came to take up the case himself. There is another unusual thing which I have to mention.

After Frizoni was examined in part on the 18th May, on the 19th he made an order, I shall read it. There is no record of that evidence here at all. But Mr. Birley thought that some objections may be put forward before him to the effect that he had taken cognizance of the case without the proper sanction of the Court; so he proceeds to re-examination to make the proceeding regular according to his opinion. Is that the manner in which a Magistrate is to record evidence ? My

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

submission is that the object of that entry here in the evidence of Frizoni is to get over what he thought he could not get over, namely, the legal objection to his jurisdiction.

It is perfectly clear that before the 18th May there was no sanction put up before him on any authority and it is perfectly clear that even when he got sanction he did not examine that complainant as he was bound to do under the law. I submit all these proceedings are of a very unusual character. These proceedings are not warranted by anything in the Code of Criminal Procedure or under any law. I can quite understand my friend's contempt for the Code, but I venture to submit that the Code applied even to a state trial and more so in a trial where persons are accused of the most serious offences known to the law. I shall show you, when I survey the evidence and put it before you that ninety per cent of that is inadmissible here and ninety per cent of it throws no light upon the charges which these persons are brought here to meet. Not only is public time and money wasted but that all that mass of evidence tends, and must necessarily tend to prejudice the accused.

In a case like this, the first thing to do is to prove that a conspiracy did exist and the next thing is to connect the particular persons with the conspiracy. What has been the method followed by my friend ? Whether he discussed oral evidence or documentary evidence he started with the assumption that these persons are guilty. He assumed their guilt and then tried to connect them with the evidence. He reads a letter and finds a reference to A.G. What is his argument ? Does he refer to any proof to show that A.G. stands for Aurobindo Ghosh ? No. His argument is "I tell you that is Aurobindo Ghosh". In order to try the accused persons you must start with the assumption that they are guilty and after to look into the evidence connecting them.

Take the Chattra Bhander. Aurobindo Ghosh is a conspirator because he is connected with the Chattra Bhandar. I submit that is entirely a wrong procedure to adopt—a pro-

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

cedure which has never been adopted before in any Court of Justice. He ought to have told you that you must proceed on the assumption that these persons are innocent of all the charges brought against them and if by pursuing the evidence you come to the conclusion that the evidence is unmistakable proof of their guilt, then and then only can you convict them.

There is another point—that is with regard to Aurobindo's domestic letters. Read these letters and you will find that they throw no light on the charges against these accused. The sanctity of his private correspondence has been wantonly and improperly violated. Was it for the purpose of proving to you that these men are guilty? I submit not. There is nothing in those letters from beginning to end which throws a light on the charges for which these men are being tried. There again my friend's argument was "don't read the letters as they stand but read between the lines". That is to say although the letters don't support the conspiracy and don't suggest any offence, yet you must not be deceived by them. Don't you know Aurobindo is guilty? Don't you know he is connected with bombs? Don't you know he has waged war against the king? Take that for granted and you find him guilty. His movement in Baroda is stated to be in connection with bombs. His articles in the Bande Mataram are referred to. There is no evidence at all reliable which is put forward to show that he is responsible for every article in the Bande Mataram. The articles breathe the ideal of freedom. My friend began his speech by saying that these were ideals which no Englishman would quarrel with. Those articles I repeat, if they show anything show that Aurobindo Ghosh was preaching from beginning to end that ideal of freedom which, we were told over and over again, no Englishman would quarrel with. Does not that argument involve the same fallacy to which I referred, namely that you must assume that Aurobindo Ghosh was in the conspiracy and after starting with that to read the articles? Here although he preaches those ideals, you must read into those articles bombs and conspiracy to warfare. Throughout the whole course of his arguments the fallacy was repeated over and over again.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

I have already told you that the correspondence of Aurobindo has been placed before you; in fact, gentlemen, his whole life has been laid bare before you. My friend's contention is that on that evidence which deals with his inner life you will see signs of conspiracy and waging war. I shall confidently take my stand upon that very correspondence and material, I shall show you that during the whole life of Aurobindo, beginning with his first work up to the day of his arrest he was actuated by a noble ideal. I shall take you through the correspondence dealt with while he was at Baroda, his utterances whether in the press or on the platform, and I shall show you that there is not one single suggestion of any conspiracy to wage war against the Government. He has throughout been actuated by a nobler ideal. You will find from the middle of 1904, 1905, 1906, and almost up to a few days before his arrest that he was actuated by that noble ideal. It will not be out of place here before I come to deal with the particular point in the case to give you a short sketch of those ideas. My friend throughout the whole course of his address did not hesitate to scoff at it, but that is a matter of no concern to me, so far as the nation was concerned he preached that lofty ideal of freedom; so far as the individual was concerned his ideal always was to go there himself and look for the God-head within. It is familiar ideal of our country. It is difficult for those not familiar with it to understand it but to you gentlemen, it is familiar.

The doctrine of Vedantism is that man is not dissociated from God; that is to say if you want to realise yourself you must look for the God within you. It is within your heart and within your soul, that you will find that God dwells and as no main can attain to his own salvation without reaching that God that is within you; so also in the case of nations without any national question arising—no nation can attain this unless it realises the highest and noblest and the best of that nation. As in the case of individuals you can not reach your God with extraneous aid, but you must make an effort—that supreme effort—yourself before you can realise the God within you; so also with a nation. It is by itself that a nation must grow; a

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

nation must attain its salvation by its unaided effort. No foreigner can give you that salvation. It is within your own hands to revive that spirit of nationality. That is the doctrine of nationality which Aurobindo has preached throughout and that was to be done not by methods which are against the traditional of the country. I ask your particular attention to that. It was not Aurobindo's philosophy that salvation was to be attained by methods inconsistent with the whole history and traditions of the writer and therefore when you find Aurobindo leaving Baroda and coming to Calcutta you find that the doctrines he preaches are not doctrines of violence but doctrine of passive resistance. It is not bombs but sufferings. He deprecates secret societies and violence and enjoins them to suffer. If there is a law which is unjust and offensive against the development of the nation, break that law by all means and take the consequences. He never asked you to apply force in the single utterance of his either in the press or on the platform. If the Government thought fit to bring in a law which hinders you from attaining that salvation, Aurobindo's advice is to break that law if necessary in the sense of not obeying it. You owe it to your conscience; you owe it to your God. If the law says you must go to jail, go to jail. That was the cardinal feature of the doctrine of passive resistance which Aurobindo preached. Is not the doctrine of passive resistance preached throughout the world on the same footing? It is peculiar to this country—this movement which has met with such abusive language from Mr. Norton? Have not the people of England done it over and over again? I say that this is the same doctrine that Aurobindo was preaching almost upto the very day when those handcuffs were put on his hand. He was oppressed with a feeling of disappointment, because his country was losing everything having lost their faith. Therefore you find whenever he preached freedom he brought out that feature clearly. He says, believe in yourself; no one can attain salvation who does not believe in himself. Similarly, he says in the case of the nation. If the nation does not feel that it has got something within it to be free to attain that salvation then there is no hope for that nation. Accordingly we find

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Aurobindo preaching "you are not cowards, you are not a set of incapable men, because you have divinity. Have faith in you, and in that faith go on towards that goal, and become a self-developed nation".

I now deal with the evidence referred to by my learned friend to show the inner work of Aurobindo from 1902 down to the day of his arrest. You will find, gentleman, that upto 1902 or 1903 there was no connection between Barin and Aurobindo.

You will find it is proved by the evidence in this case that Aurobindo went away to England. After his return he was posted at Baroda. Barin at that time was being educated at Deoghar. From there he went to Dacca to study for F.A. After that he went to Patna and thence he went to Baroda. We find him in Baroda in 1902 and 1903. My learned friend's argument is that it was during his stay in Baroda in 1902 and 1903 that the seeds of revolution were sown in the hearts of Barindra by Aurobindo. Barin says in his statement that he came away from Baroda sometime in 1903 and began to tour round the different parts of the country and preached the cause of independence. My learned friend thinks this to be an ideal with which nobody will quarrel and then with regard to this ideal he says that the seeds of this content was sown at Baroda.

First of all you will find, gentlemen, from the evidence of Sukumar Mitter and Padoo Tewari that there was no connection between Barin and Aurobindo before their meeting at Baroda in 1902 and 1903. Therefore as long as Barin was at Deoghar you find from the evidence of Sukumar and Padoo that the two brothers did not meet. Barin passed his Entrance Examination from Deoghar, he read F.A. at Dacca and then went to Bankipore and then eventually went to Baroda. The two brothers first met at Baroda. After a time Barin left Baroda and engaged himself in preaching the cause of independence of the country. From that, my learned friend argued that the poison must have been infused into Barin by Auro-

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

bindo. The best way to test that would be from what Aurobindo himself says at that time when they were together at Baroda in 1902 and 1903. There are only three exhibits 292-1, 292-3 and 292-5. I am not aware of any other letters of that period. Exhibits 292-1 is a letter deted the 2nd of July 1902. . . . . How do you find sedition or waging of war against the Government in this letter?

With regard to the reference to Jyotindra I shall deal later on. Aurobindo wanted the horoscope of his wife to show to Jyotindra who was an astrologer in the Baroda service. I want to deal later on with Jyotindra and see if he was the accused who has since been discharged. It was in 1902. That does not help the case for the prosecution at all. Amongst these letters I have just mentioned there is another letter dated the 20th of August 1902. This letter refers to his promotion and so on. There is nothing important in that letter except that soon before that time Aurobindo considers himself a strict member of the Hindoo Society. Those are all the letters which we get and which we preserved to give us an idea as to what the trend of his mind was in 1902. After that, as I have told you, Barin came away from Baroda and was engaged in preaching the cause of independence. He goes back sometime in 1904 or 1905. It is difficult to find out exactly when. It is at that time that Aurobindo complains about Barindra. You will find that from Exhibit 286-4.

If you see coupled Exhibit 286-4 with the evidence of Sukumar you will find that Aurobindo complained that Barindra would not take service. It is clear that Barin at that time went back. Aurobindo asked him to accept service but Barindra refused to work. This letter was written on 22nd October, 1905. This is not in order of time. This is the last letter of that period, before Barin goes to Baroda. Aurobindo complains, "Barin is never quiet, he will not accept any service". Therefore we see, gentlemen, that Barin goes back. It must have been that Barin's people took him to task for doing nothing and asked him to take some post to earn his

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

livelihood. Aurobindo complains "he is not quiet, he wants to go out for the service of the country". That also we find in Sukumar's evidence. That shows clearly the relation between Aurobindo and Barindra.

Then, gentlemen, you have got to consider Aurobindo's own views during that period. The career which Aurobindo sketched out in that letter is that to which he struck up to the day of his arrest. I refer you to the letter of Aurobindo to his wife, dated 13th August, 1905. At that time Barin was living at Baroda. I have shown from the letter of 20th October, 1905, that Aurobindo was complaining about Barin. So Barin was at that time at Baroda. The seeds of revolution were again sown. It is better to find out what Aurobindo's own views were about the time. These letters are Exhibits 286-1 and 286-2. I would prefer to read the Bengali letter. You must remember, gentlemen, that at that time Aurobindo did not acquire a sufficient knowledge in Bengali. It is written after Sanskrit. You remember, gentlemen, that Andha Rajar Mahishi. This allusion refers to queen Gandhari who used to blindfold her eyes as her husband Dhritarastra was blind. Getleman, you see that Aurobindo describes himself as Pagal (a mad man) and tells his wife to settle as to what path she would follow. He makes the reference to Gandhari and expresses his hope that inasmuch as there is Hindoo blood in her veins she will follow the course which he has taken up. The life he sketched out he followed literally. The man has spent all his income for the good of the country for charity keeping only that which is necessary for his bare subsistence. The first great ideal which he sets out in this letter is that he must regard himself as trustee of all money that belongs to him. It is his duty to spend as little as possible for himself for the purpose that he may continue to live and give the rest to God. How? By doing God's work, namely by feeding those who are hungry and by assisting those who are in need. It is then and then only that you can give back what you owe to God. If a man does not do it he is then a thief. It is not for his own selfish end. He is determined to lead that life. He will keep for himself only what *is* absolutely necessaro for bare

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

subsistence and the rest he will back to God. The only way you can do that is by way of charity, by feeding the hungry and by rendering assistance to those who are in need of it.

The second great ideal to which he refers is he has got the conviction in his mind, that it is possible to see God, not to see God in the objective sense but according to Hindoo religion to see God in his own mind. One can discover the God-head that is within him. It is easy to scoff at this. But here is a man giving expression to his earnest longing to realise the God-head himself. This is his second great ideal. There is another point and that is this. There is also in this letter a covered reference to Guru (Spiritual guide).

Because you know gentlemen that when a Hindoo brings himself under a spiritual guide he never discloses the manner of his *Guru* nor the fact that he has done it. That is part of the religion. Unless you get the permission of the *Guru* you can not give it out even to your wife "Jaibar Niyam dekhayche", that is somebody has pointed out the rules of conduct which will help him to enter that path following which he can realise the God That is within him. Then he began to practise. That is to say he began to shape his life according to those ruler.

Then he says "after practising them for one month, and realising the signs which the Hindoo religion has said to be the signs of that stage", "everybody is entitled to that path. Unless you desire to enter that line you can not get it. But it is within the power of every individual to attain that". In this letter he asks his wife to write to him whether she desires to enter this line or not, so that he may further correspond with her on that point. I ask you to remember this because you will find it is fully explained in his subsequent letters to which my learned friend also has referred.

Then he comes to his third ideal. Here he lays down the basis of his patriotism. There again the ideal is drawn from Vedantism. You know the doctrine according to the Vedantism is that the whole world is a manifestation of God. Unless

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

you realise that the whole is a manifestation of Divinity, as long as you do not realise within yourself that the world you see around you, the country in which you live are manifestations of Divinity then all these are unreal as long as you do not realise the association, the connection between them and the Absolute. But when you realise they are not seperated from but are parts and manifestation of Divinity that very moment they cease to be unreal and become real. "What do you think of your country? It is not merely forest, river, etc". To Aurobindo it is the manifestation of Mothethood. That is another aspect of Divinity according to Hindoo religion. His basis of patriotism is that you must show regard to your country that you can discover and realise the Motherhood of the country. You must so love your country that you can realise within yourself that it is another aspect of God. A man who believes in Vedanta can see clearly and finds no difficulty at all. That is the basis of his patriotism. You must realise Divinity in the country in which you live. Aurobindo feels that nationalism has no place unless it leads to universal humanity. Unless nations develop in that way, the ideal of humanity can never be reached. I shall point out from article after article in the Bande-Mataram that as the individual must live in the light of the society so the nation must live in the light of humanity without which the whole philosophy is meaningless absolutely. He looks upon the country as the Mother. As I have explained that is another manifestation of God.

Then he says that his ideal is independence and the last line of this paragraph makes it clear. Some day or other, it may not be in his life-time that this ideal will be accomplished. "When the mother is oppressed what will her sons do, ect."? A very curious argument has been based upon that. He says how can you do that. You have got no guns, no swords. "It is my ideal," he says "that the country should realise freedom some day or other". He explains it by his answer. How can you do it? "I am not referring to *Ksharatej* but I am referring to *Brahmatej*". My learned friend's argrument is that

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

so far as Aurobindo himself is concerned he will do the advising but others will be left to bombs. Where do you find this in these letters? My learned friend's argument is on the whole of this sort that you must assume that Aurobindo is guilty. Then you are to read the letters between the lines. According to my friend's contention, so far as Aurobindo is concerned, he will apply the Brahmatej, and make others to use the Khsatratej. If you read these letters you must come to the conclusion that he deprecates other forces. The only force upon which he relies and to which he appeals is the intellectual force. It is upon this force, he says, the future welfare of the country rests. He is going to rely upon guns and swords. With all respect I submit that the suggestion of my learned friend is absurd. Anyone who reads the letters must come to the conclusion that the means which Aurobindo suggests is not physical force but the force of character, the force of intellect, upon those forces the future of the country will be based. He says "don't you think that physical force is the only force in the world, there is a higher force and that is intellectual force, the force of character. Rely upon that force. That is the means which should be employed for the deliverance of the country". It is not possible to put the construction upon the letter as my learned friend has done.

Referring to that part of the letter which says "If a demon sits on the breast of the mother what would the sons do". Counsel said—what is the meaning of that? It is only an analogy. He says that he regards his country, not as merely a collection of fields, hills, rivers, and so forth but he regards her as his Mother; then he says that he is only referring to the fact that the country is under subjection. He has used only a metaphor to shew that his countrymen are not to sit idle—but to act so as to realise his ideal. The letter was not intended for publication, it was not an open letter to his countrymen; it was to his wife. (. . .). Does not it mean that regarding the facts that their country is in a wretched condition, it is far away from freedom, it is in bondage? So it is the duty of every man in India to stir himself to realise the ideal of freedom. His basis of patriotism is that he regards

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

his country as Mother. It is to him not a physical nonentity but is a concrete manifestation of Divinity. His central idea is that the country is a concrete manifestation of Divinity.

The regeneration of the country has to be brought about by force of character and intellect and not by physical force. Then the next paragraph makes it clear.

You understand, gentlemen, what he means by saying "wife is the strength of husband". That attribute in Aurobindo by which he realises the Divinity is Sakti and he brings that into relationship between a husband and wife and say wife is the Sakti. It is through her that he realises the higher relation of man and wife.

Referring to the sentence "will you utter the mantra of worshipping the Saheb life, Usha?" Counsel said he thereby means to say "will you worship Western ideals?" He is disparaging those who follow Western ideals.

"Ei chila sei goponia kotha." He explains the secret in the letter and asks for the co-operation of his wife. He asks his wife to worship God, then she will be able to realise these things. There is nothing into the letter except that, it refers to his wife's vices which he says, are vices of the present time. Then he says that every high ideal is now-a-days laughed at.

I refer your Honour to the letter, dated the 30th August, 1905. I submit that the letter shows no disposition on the part of Aurobindo to use physical force of any description at all. On the contrary what the writer does rely upon is what he calls (Brahmatej). You will find later on that all throughout his activities he merely advocates the application of the force to which the phrase Brahmatej refers. Here is a man who regards it as a part of his ideal of religion to bring about the salvation of his country and that by applying Brahmatej; it is for you to consider what the man had in contemplation. It is a truth of political philosophy. You remember in this connection that no government, however, absolute or representative, it may be, can exist except without the consent of the people. It is a

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

maxim which is well recognised by political philosopher from Hobbes to Spencer downwards. When a government exists it shows conclusively that it exists with the consent of the people. He preaches that the salvation of the country must be attained by people who possess Brahmatej. First of all, I submit that he preaches the ideal of freedom because he thinks that until a transformation in the thought of the people is brought about he cannot accomplish his ideal. He says and says candidly that it cannot be brought about in life-time of an individual. But before that point is reached he holds that the people must be educated at any rate. And it is when the consent of the people is lost that the Government ceases to exist. What are the means he adopts when he comes to Calcutta ? He takes up the cause of National Education. All throughout his activities and until the day of his arrest he was always in favour of National Education. He sacrificed his worldly prospects in order that he might improve the national education of his country. He joins the National Council of Education and fills an important post there. He engages himself in the Swadeshi and Boycott movements. In this connection his ideal is that when the people have learnt to love the country they must encourage the industries of their country. Aurobindo's view with regard to Swadeshi is that it is not purely industrial. I do not desire to justify Aurobindo's connection with Swadeshi and boycott movement purely on industrial lines. This way of thinking is inconsistent. What I do say is that he has got one all-absorbing ideal for the regeneration of his country, and the basis of that ideal is religion. His advocacy of the Swadeshi, boycott and national education is not only for the industrial development of the country, not only the development of the education of his country but he thinks that these are means which are conducive to the awakening of the national spirit of this country. This is the line of activity. Before I deal with the various documentary evidence upon this point, you will allow me to place before you two letters which will throw some light. One letter is dated 30th August, 1905 which will show the thing in its two aspects, and the other letter is dated the 17th February, 1908. I shall also refer to another letter to which my learned friend has not referred. It is of the 20th

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

February, 1908. The first letter is marked as 292-4 and the second 292-10. The first letter is set out in he first volume of Exhibits page 401. With your permission I will deal with the letter in Bengali.

Counsel next read the letter in original Bengali and then the English translation. The letter stated "I have not written to you for a long time. I was to return on the 8th but I could not do so. Where-ever Providence took me to I went. I was not engaged in my work but His".

Commenting on this Counsel said, this letter shows where he did go. Various witnesses also spoke about it in the course of the trial. The contents of the speeches he delivered will show in what way his activities were directed. I submit that whatever activities he was engaged in were based on religion.

My learned friend seemed to have thought that Aurobindo in his statement dissociated himself from political work. But in his statement he says, "in all my activities, political, religious, or otherwise, I followed the principles which are enunciating himself from it, he admits that he was engaged in a political work. My learned friend has a marvellous faculty of misunderstanding Aurobindo. There is an interesting point in my learned friend's address. With reference to the transformation of Aurobindo's thought as referred to in the letter my learned friend was going to suggest something, but all on a sudden he turned away in another direction and suggested that on account of the "sweets' letter" there was a transformation in his thought. My learned friend branched it off as it were and said his case was that Aurobindo was engaged throughout in the conspiracy. That point he gave up, namely, the suggestion that "sweets' letter" had anything to do with this wonderful transformation in Aurobindo's activities.

Counsel here read the letter further on, which says "the condition of mind is different now and I am no longer subject to my own will. I shall have to do whatever He bids me." Your honour will see how Aurobindo's conviction were getting deeper and deeper every day. You are familiar with the Hindu

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

thought on the point. In this connection I may point out to your honour the utterances of Ramkrishna . . . and other saints. The man considering himself as the actor is inconsistent with the principles of Hindu religion, the very essence of which is *i.e.*. you are the player of the instrument and I am instrument itself. This thought is referred to in the letter of the 30th August in which Aurobindo says to his wife "you may think that I am doing all this of my own accord but these are not my actions. I am merely an instrument of the Divinity within."

Continuing Counsel said : You are also aware of the line in the "Gita"—*i.e.*, Thou dwellest inside I do whatever Thou dost engage me in.

Mr. Das read the line in the letters which showed that God had shown a specimen of his boundless mercy. Does this—asked Counsel—suggest bombs ? It marks the beginning of his religious convictions. Aurobindo says further, on the letter that God will show His mercy to her also. He will show her also the way. Does it suggest that his wife is to join the conspiracy and engage in the preparation of bombs to kill the English ? It is for the wife to help the husband in the exercise of the religious rites. Aurobindo used the word in the letter referred to above. He calls his wife according to Hindu ideal. I suggest that this transformation marks the beginning of Aurobindo's religious conviction. The wife is to assist the husband in the exercise of his religious rites. Aurobindo writes to his wife "Pray to God half-an-hour every day and He will give you strength. You will be in a position to assist me in my religious practices".

Counsel read the portion of the letter which says *i.e.*, what he writes is not allowed to be divulged. Counsel commenting on this said, if a man takes the he is not to divulge it to any one, even to his wife unless he gets permission from his Guru. Aurobindo says that the matter is *i.e.*, secret. I submit that even if the language of this letter is strained no other construction could be put upon this. He says *i.e.*, I have not said it to anybody else except you and I am not allowed to divulge it". Why ? If it is a matter of conspiracy the conspirators know

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

it, Aurobindo says The Government translation of this is "I have been specially forbidden to disclose it". I submit that this is not a proper translation. The correct translation would be "it is not allowable". The letter of the 30th August is on a purely religious topic; because he for a business matter refers his wife to Sarojini. After his return from the Congress he must have taken the mantra and he was auxious to take his wife along with him.

Barin went to Baroda in the year 1905. My learned friend suggests that it was at this time that the seeds of anarchism were sown. The letter Ex. 286-3 was written before Aurobindo came to Calcutta. First of all it shows that at that time he was not interesting himself in Calcutta politics. He did not know anything about Bengal politics at that time excepting Swadeshi movement which was all over India at that time. The letter states further on "I have had to spend a lot of money on account of the Swadeshi movement. I have another movement in view which requires unlimited money".

But what is this movement ? My learned friend suggests, that is the movement that you have got here. But was it started at that time ? Was it started as far back as 1905 ? Aurobindo writes "I have had to spend a lot of money on account of the Swadeshi movement. I wish to carry out another movement which requires unlimited money." I submit, observed Counsel, this movement is not the movement of the bomb. Aurobindo's idea was to start an extensive movement of Vedantism. He desired to spread it not only all over India but all over the world. He is a Vedantist and he bases whole of his activities on Vedantism. He was thinking of starting the movement on the basis of his truest principles. You must not foget that it is not a matter of conjecture that Vedantism may be carried outside India. It has already been carried into America and also into England though not to the same extent into the latter. The movement of bombs according to my learned friend was inaugurated in Calcutta sometime after the time mentioned in the letter. Whenever my learned friend comes accross the word "movement" he at once comes to the

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

conclusion that it must be a movement of bombs. I need not trouble your honour with anything further about this letter.

The next question is when Aurobindo came to Calcutta. He came sometime in May, 1906, and then he went to Baroda back again. It is very important to fix the date. Here is a letter from Aurobindo to his father-in-law. It is marked 292-6 and dated 8th June. You will find the letter on page 5, Book I. It is written from Calcutta. The letter states "if you are anxious to send Mrinalini down to Calcutta I have no objection. Barin has fallen ill. I suggest that he may go to Shillong for a change. If he goes I am sure, you will take care of him. Barin is somewhat erratic. He is specially fond of knocking about in a spasmodic fashion when he should stay at home and nurse his health. I have learnt not to interfere with him in this respect. If I interfere and try to check him, he is likely to go off at a tangent and become worse."

Commenting on this Counsel observed, my learned friend has made use of this letter and observed that Aurobindo is a very affectionate brother.

On the 7th July, observed Counsel, Aurobindo was at Baroda. Between the 6th July and August, there is no letter to throw any light. If you turn to page 254 of the Book I, you will find at the bottom of the page, that Aurobindo is described as a service-holder. This document is dated the 1st of August, 1906. So far as documentary evidence is concerned, you find that Aurobindo was in Calcutta on that date.

It is clear—observed Mr. Das—that Aurobindo had come to Calcutta, shortly before the 1st of August. Witness Sukumar Mitter also spoke about this, but his evidence is rather hazy with regard to dates. It happens that he never went to Baroda after that. He must have sent his resignation. The National College was well established in the meantime and my learned friend calls the period between August 1906 and October of the same year the "period of great activities". Aurobindo became the Principal of the National College within this period. Within this period of time the "Bande Mataram" was

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

started. He was certainly one of the promoters of the "Bande Mataram" company and the venture, the "Chattra Bhandar" was called into being. These are the three lines of his activities. I will prove here that so far as the "Chattra Bhandar" is concerned, he had no connection with it except that he signed this name as a witness. This was a mere formal matter. He was connected with both the institutions, the National Council of Education and the "Bande Mataram" if I am allowed to call the latter an institution. I do not admit for a moment that he was Editor of the "Bande Mataram". But I do not for a moment deny that he was connected with it and certainly he was connected with it as a contributor.

My learned friend speaking about the "Chattra Bhandar" observed that it is a limb of the conspiracy. Because, Aurobindo was connected with it, or Aurobindo is a conspirator, so the "Chattra Bhandar" is a limb of conspiracy. The question is "Is Aurobindo a conspirator" ? The charge that he is a conspirator is laid at his door, because of his alleged connection with the "Chattra Bhandar". First of all, if you look at the Memorandum of Association of the "Chattra Bhandar", you find that Aurobindo signs his name as witness.

My learned friend says that the organisation is a limited liability company, its Articles of Association and so forth are mere devices. He observes that they do not represent the real state of affairs. The argument is that the "Chattra Bhandar" became a limited liability company with a view to conceal its real object.

Mr. Norton : I never said that.

Mr. Das : Perhaps it is owing to my weak intellect that I could not understand what my learned friend said. He said as a matter of fact that it is a cloak to conceal the design. Let us look at the documents itself, I am referring to Clause III of it. It says that the Company is started to carry on business as merchants, traders, importers, and general business merchants, both wholesale and retail. It shows that "Chattra Bhandar" is not purely swadeshi. It proposes to import. As for export-

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

ing opinion varies. I am not, however going to enter upon an economic discussion. If you look at "D" you find that it has no connection with any political design. It does not look like a conspiracy. Mr. Norton remarks that this Company was started as a cloak to conceal the nefarious design. But what do we find here : shareholders are restricted. It depends upon the directors to take shareholders in. Rule X declares that if a shareholder is indebted he can not buy or sell his share to get rid of the debt. But if you read Rules VI and X together you find that there is no difficulty in selling or buying shares. There is also no difficulty for outside to come in. Still my learned friend holds that the "Chattra Bhandar" was a device to conceal its nefarious design.

My friend suggests that the "Chattra Bhandar" was intended to help the conspiracy. 40 per cent of its profit is to be divided amongst shareholders. My learned friend commenting on the clause which provides that 30 per cent of its profit is to be devoted to philanthopic work, observes that it was to effectuate the nefarious design.

It is a custom in this country amongst people who start business as limited liability companies, or those who start business by themselves to distribute a portion of the profit to the welfare of the community, I submit that is a perfectly good thing. You find this, even amongst common shop-keepers who set apart something which they call "britti".

Mr. Norton : Is that evidence ?

Mr. Das : It is a common custom in this country. Can I not refer to that ? Your Honour may have come across this in many civil cases. It is very usual amongst shop-keepers to keep portions of their profit. They do it in this way : For each article sold they keep one pice and this they devote to charitable purposes. We have the great institution at Sodepur which the Marwaris keep up in that way—the institution where your Honour sends your horse to be broken.

My submission is that if they really intended to start the "Chattra Bhandar" as a cover for their dark design, why did

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

they start a limited liability Company at all ? Could they not start a partnership business for that purpose ? If you start a Company, you bring yourself directly under the inspection and supervision of the Director. The accounts are rendered liable to be inspected and checked; whereas if you start a shop, you have to avoid all that. However there is nothing to prove that the limited liability Company was formed to devote the profits to the nefarious purposes. If they had that design, they could start a shop, there is absolutely no evidence to show that profits were appropriated for any dark design.

Mr. Norton : There was no profit at all.

Mr. Das : If there was no profit, it cannot be said that they had any nefarious design. The whole thing is based upon suspicion. Assuming Aurobindo had such design, what proof is there that Aurobindo was connected with it ? He simply signed his name as a witness. I desired to show that no suggestion of suspicion can be based upon the evidence adduced on this point. Witness No. 84, Pobitra Chandra Datta said, "I went to Subodh Mullick and got him and Aurobindo Ghose to sign as witnesses because they were big men". Mr. Norton tried to get out from this witness Aurobindo's connection with the "Chattra Bhandar". He says "we decided to go there, as we thought that they were big men. Subodh Mullick had made a donation of a lakh of rupees towards the Bengal National College. He was looked upon as a great man in Calcutta". Pobitra said "Aurobindo used to live at that time at 12, Wellington Square. I went to Subodh Mullick and he told me looking towards Aurobindo Ghosh 'you had better take his signature.' Speaking about Aurobindo Ghose's connection with the Bande Mataram, my learned friend observed "I do not care whether he was Editor or not. I say he is the paper itself". Mr. Das here read the deposition of Sukumar Sen. The witness said (he was at that time professor of the National College)—"Aurobindo never advocated violence, or I would have remembered it. The Company was regarded merely as a National organisation than a commercial venture. The object was more political than commercial".

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Continuing Counsel said, I find that Aurobindo was connected with the old Bande Mataram. He was present at some of the meetings of the Company. He was not the manager of the proper. He was sometime the Managing Director of the "Bonde Mataram" Company.

Counsel referring to exhibit 950 D said that Aurobindo was not connected with the Bande Mataram as Editor or Sub-Editor. He had nothing to do with the dealing with telegrams, reprints etc. The prosecution of the Bande Mataram I may tell Your Honour was for having published an English translation of an article which had appeared in the Yugantor.

Judge : Does not the witness Sukumar Sen say who was the Editor ?

Mr. Das : The witness stated that Bepin Chandra Pal refused to act as joint-editor along with Aurobindo Ghosh. He wanted to have the entire control of the paper as the Editor-in-Chief. But there was difference of opinion. Aurobindo Ghose was offered the Editorship but he refused to take the sole responsibility. For he could not do that. He was at that time the Principal of the National College. In only one issue his name was published as Editor. But in the next issue it was taken off.

Judge : Some addresses were presented to him as Editor.

Mr. Das : That was through the impression that he was Editor. Aurobindo was not responsible for anything that appeared in the Bande Mataram. There is no magic in the name "Editor".

My learned friend says he does not care if Aurobindo is Editor. He says that he is the paper and that this paper was born in conspiracy. Let us look into it and see if we can find anything dangerous or anything that suggests bombs or conspiracy or waging war against the Government. Far from any such suggestion your Honour will find suggestions which, I have said, are the ideals of independence, and the means suggested are those of passive resistance. The point on which

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

the greatest stress is laid in the articles is National education, swadeshi and boycott. These points are typical of this paper. The fourth point was the general idea of freedom. To reach the ideal of freedom they advocated the same policy I have mentioned up to the last day. You will find that they not only did not advocate the formation of secret societies but whenever anything happened which drew their attention they deprecated the secret societies in an emphatic language. I do not for a moment suggest that the ideal of the Bande Mataram was not "absolute independence". It was that and nothing but that, and they always deprecated the ideal of improvement of the Government in this country by the putting in one member in the Executive Council, or additional members in the Viceroy's Council. It was repeated over and over again that they were not in favour of reforms, but what they desired was a "forming". It would not serve the national ideal by legislation of tinkering kind, that is to say giving some advantages here and some advantages there. All the articles read out by the prosecution in condemnation of Lord Morley's scheme were in reference to that. Those are the honest views of the paper. If those views constitute in any way the waging of war against Government, I will have to say that Aurobindo is guilty. My contention is that it is open to them to preach the ideal of freedom and lay down the methods in the way the Bande Mataram has done—the methods of passive resistance, boycott, national education and Swaraj. Wherever any suggestion of any violence is made your Honour will invariably find that it is necessary for the purpose of repelling an attack. I shall read a few articles to show that it is not true that the Bande Mataram was born in conspiracy. I shall refer to an issue of the 18th September, 1906 under the heading "That Sinful Desire." . . . . It refers to these constitutional troubles within the Congress itself. I submit that there is nothing felonious in that articles unless my friend means to say that you must read between the lines.

Mr. Das then read an article entitled "The idea of National Council" to show the attitude of the Bande Mataram towards secret societies. Counsel read a paragraph dated 3rd October,

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

1908, which he put to Purno Chandra Lahiri in cross-examination. The article was entitled "Golden Bengal Scare".

Now with regard to National College I have one word to say. There again I do not quite understand my friend's argument. He does not suggest as I thought at first he did that the Council of National Education was limb of the conspiracy against the Government. What I understood him to suggest was—I say this subject to correction by your Honour—that Aurobindo made use of the National Council to give effect to his nefarious views. If that was so then no inference can be drawn against him from the fact that he was connected with it. I ask your Honour not to draw any inference from the fact that he was connected with the National College. If inference is to be drawn it must go further; not only must the National Council be not harmless but it must also be proved that the National Council is a part and limb of the conspiracy. Unless that is established, mere connection with the National Council will not give rise to any inference adverse to Aurobindo Ghose. You will find in the evidence that Aurobindo was connected with it not only after it was started but he came to Bengal expressly for the purpose of carrying on the National Council of Education. He took part in it before it was started as we find in the evidence of Satish Chandra Mukerjee, and the best part of the argument show that he did not intend to use the National Council of Education as a party organ in this conspiracy. At the time the National Council was formed who were the men we find in it? Dr. Rash Behari Ghose, Sir Gooroo Das Bannerjee and Mr. Nagendra Nath Ghose with whose name no one will ever try to associate politics. That conclusively proves that Aurobindo had no control over it, or if he had, it was not his intention to make it a sort of organ for his political activities. The people in Bengal wanted to keep the National Council of Education, free from political activities. This inference clearly arises from the names I have mentioned. It was intended, as the prospectus shows, to be an institution to further the education of the country and it was intended to be free from all political bias of either party. Aurobindo was selected as the Principal of this College because

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

he was under the circumstances the fittest person. When he came to Calcutta in August, 1906, he was still in the service of Baroda. He does not give it up until after he is appointed Principal of the National College. With reference to this I desire to read just a few lines of the evidence of Satish Chandra Mukerjee—* * * . There is no evidnce even that Aurobindo exercised any active control so far as the selection of the course of studies was concerned. I submit that this fact is of no importance at all in arriving at the question whether Aurobindo Ghose is guilty or not of the charges brought against him. I submit that although it does not help you in coming to any conclusion as to his guilt it shows—as I have submitted to you before—that the cour se of the activity of Aurobindo Ghose was in accordance with the principles which were enunciated in that letter of 13th August, 1905. That is all that I have got to submit up to this period of 1906.

The next period I take is the period from October, 1906 to April, 1907. This is a period of very little activity on Aurobindo's part as you will find during that period he was mostly ill. You will find—I will state the facts before I prove them—that he was at Deoghar from 11th December, 1906 to the 14th December, 1906, and again from 27th January, 1907, to the middle of April, 1907, and you have heard from the evidence of Sukmar Sen that on the night he left for Deoghar permission was asked—after his name appeared as Editor of the Bande Mataram—if he would agree to be the Editor and upon his refusal his name was removed the next day. With regard to three different dates which I have given there is very little documentary evidence in the case, and from Aurobindo's written statement I shall have to refer to it. In this connection we see that he was ill. He had to take leave from the National College on several occasions; in fact he was practically ill during the whole of this period * * *. Satish Chandra Mukerjee was asked about it and he said that the statement about Aurobindo taking leave was true.

Another thing which I should like to point out in this connection is that there is no suggestion that at that time there

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

was any activity in Seal's lodge. That was from a few days before February, 1908, to sometime in April, 1908.

With reference to this period my learned friend read out some articles in the Bande Mataram dealing with autonomy, Swaraj, etc., and he further said that they contained a show of racial antipathy, that there was no love for humanity and that they advocated a direct violation of the law. Well, I have read those articles over and over again and I say that they are absolutely—everyone of them—free from any one of those charges, except the charge—and I did not understand my friend to bring that in as a charge—that they wanted to bring in absolute Swaraj. What I did understand him to say —if I have understood my friend aright—was that the means suggested for attaining Swaraj, was not legal and it was that that made the Ideal of swaraj improper. He took care to say that and I must say that it was very fair on the part of my learned friend to point it out.

So far as these articles are concerned I submit that the charge of racial antipathy cannot be brought against the Bande Mataram. The particular note in the Bande Mataram was "love for its own people" and if that in itself involved some antipathy it may be expected, but what I want to lay stress on is, that the dominant note was not antipathy but love for its own people, but in dealing with it, may be, that the articles have referred to other nations not in very complimentary language. If you read the whole thing you will find that the object is not an attack on any nation at all, but to point out that we must fall back upon our own resources, and stand on our own legs, or in other words, as I have pointed out before, that you cannot attain your ideal except through your own salvation. The Bande Mataram had to attack other nations because it pointed out that the people of this country were under the spell of foreign civilisation, under alien civilisation and wanted to dispel by these articles that peculiar hypnotism that was cast on the people of this country by European nations. Not that European civilisation is bad but that European civilisation is for "Europeans". European nations

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

must develop in their own way; they must rise to the noblest and best and their own traditions. So also with the Indians; they must also take their own stand. Not that European civilisation is bad—I want you to particularly notice that—you won't find that in the articles—but that European civilisation applied to us, European traditions brought into this country, are not the materials upon which this nation can grow. That is the philosophy underlying all articles. The European civilisation is as a tree which grows in the soil of England; if you bring that tree here, it will not attain the same growth because the soil is not congenial. In the same way the development of a nation must be based on its own traditions. If you base it on any other tradition the soil will not be congenial. As for antipathy and dislike for humanity they are not to be found in those articles. I submit they breathe all that my friend denies. I say according to these people nationalism has no rational basis to grow upon unless it be for humanity. I ask your permission here to read an article which comes into this period. It is written in very figurative language, but the thing it brings out is the inner philosophy of this School.

Counsel next referred to the period from April, 1907, to September, 1907 i.e., up to the acquittal of Aurobindo Ghose in the sedition case. In this period, counsel said, Aurobindo's activities were confined to the National College and Bande Mataram. In this connection counsel read a letter written to Aurobindo from Tokio sympathising with him in his trouble with the Bande Mataram trial. There are some articles of the Bande Mataram of that period. Counsel then read the articles of the 17th September headed "The secret of prudence and moderation". The articles also deals with passive resistance. "Every country fought its battle of freedom in its own peculiar way. We can use our passive resistance in such a way, etc." * * *I need not trouble your Honour with other articles because the idea is the same. They are articles on the Congress, Swaraj and so forth.

It is a curious feature that the whole evidence against

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Aurobindo is doubtful. When your Honour finds, so far as Aurobindo case is concerned, that there is something unusual, something difficult to understand, I submit that your Honour may come to the conclusion that there is something behind the series of difficulties. When your Honour finds that some act is repeated a number of times your Honour may draw that inference. * * * I suggested to him why he did not put any mark. He says he put some mark in blue pencil which was obliterated. * * * I submit there is nothing in it which goes against Aurobindo.

The next period I take up now is from September, 1907 to December, 1907. Your Honour will find that from the middle of October, 1907 to about end of December, 1907, Aurobindo was ill and he was at Deoghar. I ask your Honour's attention to the letters and other evidence on this point because this matter is of some importance in connection not only with this topic but also with different topics.

Counsel next read a letter from Mr. Palka which related the entire activities of Aurobindo with regard to the Congress. The writer invited a number of extremist delegates. Aurobindo wanted to put the Congress on a representative basis. He said that what is alleged to be a national gathering must be national in the true sense of the word.

Judge: The Congress has ceased? According to the Extremists the Congress has ceased to be. But according to the moderate it is still going. It is like "The Duma is dead. Long live the Duma". Counsel next referred to the slip which was sent to the Bande Mataram for discussion.

Your Honour will find, continued counsel, from the evidence of Mr. K.B. Dutt that Mr. Surendranath Banerjea did not like the idea of giving up boycott at the conference. A few days after they issued a circular that Swadeshi covered everything. The extremists say that it was merely a trick to mislead the people who feel very thoroughly on the question of boycott.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Mr. Das referred to a tetter from Mr. Tilak to Aurobindo Ghose. It asked Aurobindo Ghose to invite a large number of extremist-delegates to the Congress. Mr. Tilak wanted to have a separate Conference for the nationalists. His idea was to have a separate Conference as soon as the deliberations of the Congress were over. Their attitude was not to break up the Congress. They want to have the question of electing Dr. Rash Behari Ghose decided by voting. The extremists wanted to have a separate sort of party organisation for them. In England the parties have their own organisations,—the Liberals, the Conservatives down to the Socialists. They wanted to see that the views of the delegates were represented by the Congress. I submit the Nationalist Conference was held and passed resolutions. These resolutions were published in news-papers. They assembled not to break up the Congress. They did not say "if you don't accept our views, we shall break your head". They had no bombs in their contemplation. I do not say as my friend suggested that they had bombs in their contemplation.

Judge: It is rather forcing their views on the Congress.

Mr. Norton: Surely.

Mr. Das: The position of affairs was this. The nationalist delegates did not want Dr. Rash Behari Ghose as the President. They wanted Lala Lajpat Rai. If he declined, then they would have Mr. Surendranath Banerjea.

Mr. Das: There is no difference between extremists and moderates. The moderates have the ideal of Swaraj on the colonial lines while the extremists have the ideal of Swaraj in the independent form.

Mr. Norton: The moderates have the ideal of Government as obtained in the colonies.

Mr. Das: What is the difference? Where is the control of England over the Colonies.

Judge: It is a matter of policy.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Mr. Das:--It is not a question of ideals. The Parliament cannot force its views. The extremists liked to put their ideals in a more logical form. The Bande Mataram made this point clear. The moderates and extremists mean the same thing but the moderates have not the courage to sing as the extremists.

The same letter contained a phrase which was printed as "Government Expression", saying that if Dr. Ghose was rejected, there would be "Government Expression".

Judge: It is probably repression.

Mr. Das next made reference to a letter, from Mr. Tilak to Babu Moti Lal Ghose asking him not to accept Dr. Ghose as the leader. Counsel referred to the manifesto issued by Aurobindo Ghose inviting extremist delegates to the nationalist conference here.

Your Honour heard the discussion about the scheme for the constitution of the Congress. That was another point on which there was a good deal of dispute between the extremists and the moderates. Mr. Norton suggested that he got it at Surat, nobody would dispute this. To my mind it was a scheme drawn up for the purpose of drawing constitution for the Congress. The subjects mentioned were National Fund, Arbitration Court, Primary Education, Swaraj and Boycott. They were to be discussed either in the Congress or it suggests a scheme that is to be proposed before the country or the Congress. The worst point in that is the establishment of Arbitration system, of course from our point of view. There is nothing sinister; nothing suggestive of Bombs, conspiracy or anything of the kind.

Then some other letters appear during that period. I will not read them. They prove Aurobindo's connection with the Bande Mataram. It is admitted. That is the letter I have referred to in connection with Aurobindo's residing at Deoghar. In this letter the writer made suggestions for the improvement of the Bande Mataram. It was from a man of Bombay. He thought that Aurobindo has some influence over the Bande

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Mataram, that is why he wrote it to him. It is clear, that Aurobindo had some sort of control and I have all along admitted that both here and elsewhere in connection with the other case.

Aurobindo's work was a work of love to the "Bande Mataram". He would not be put to such a position so as to be responsible for anything appearing in the Bande Mataram. He had not the time nor his health would allow him to look after or supervise that paper. That is why he refused to be the editor. He was not the editor at any time. It is the case with English newspapers that the reporters send their reports and they are printed and the editor is responsible for what appears. He associates himself with the views but he does not hold himself responsible for anything that appears in the editorial columns. I can't ask your Honour to read the whole but there was nothing to show that he was responsible. Continuing counsel said—I have got a few articles of the Bande Mataram placed before Your Honour. I placed articles published in December 1906. I have got 3 or 4 articles representative of different views of the different parties. Aurobindo was arrested on the 2nd May, 1908. I have taken up all the articles from December 1906 to April 1908. They conclusively support the contention that I have made from beginning to end.

Mr. Das then dealt with several articles from the paper during this period and assailed the argument of Mr. Norton about the alleged connection between the National papers.

He continued : I have dealt with the evidence with regard to the so-called conspiracy and I now desire to draw You Honour's attention to certain points in common between the moderate papers, the Bengalee and the Indu Prokash for instance and the Anglo-Indian papers like the Statesman, the Indian Daily News, the Pioneer and the Englishman. Still these papers have their peculiarities. I can not forget the fact that there must be a great deal in common between them. It is, by no means, a violent assumption to say that. But inspite of the points in common, each paper must stand on its own

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

legs. Your Honour will find certain peculiarities in each paper. Your Honour knows the Bengalee and the Indu Prokash of Bombay are perfectly moderate papers. I do not know why my friend will extend his triangle so far.

So far as the Bande Mataram and the Jugantar are concerned, I shall show by reference to one article that according to the Bande Mataram, the ideal of freedom must be attained by passive resistance, Swadeshi Boycott, national education, Courts of Arbitration etc. To quote from the famous speech of Gladstone, "you must educate yourself for self-government. You must take up as much work of Government as you can do". National education, Swadeshi, all these are methods laid down by the Bande Mataram. The paper says that it is only by pursuing these methods that you can attain self-government. Make your-self fit for self-government. This is the doctrine of political philosophers in Europe upon which the view is based. This view has again been analysed by the Bande Mataram and adapted to Vedantism pure and simple. Every philosopher in England deals with the growth of democracy. From the time of Hobbs down to the time of Spencer,—passing from the period of English History known as the period of French revolution it has been held that the Government can only exist with the tacit consent on the part of the people. In point of time, if the character of the Government be most despotic that you can imagine or representative, the mere fact that the Government does exist shows conclusively that the people has consent to it. There was a time, according to Hobbs, when the people and the king used to meet together. They met why ? To determine the consent of the people.

Locke borrowed his views from Rousseau on this point. Spencer's "Man *vs.* State" embodies this view. As a matter of fact, the relation between the Governor and the governed is based upon actual contract. It may not be so historically speaking but it must be true logically speaking. You cannot govern people against their wishes. At every point of time that the Government exists, it shows that it exists, because the people lent their support.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Continuing counsel said Aurobindo also exposes the same theory. He gives a new expression and makes it a new point of his philosophy. This doctrine of the tacit consent of the people and another doctrine which is misapplied, namely "vox populi vox dei," are applicable in this connection. Aurobindo holds the same principles whether with regard to the nation or the individual. He sees in the development of the society or the individual, the manifestation of God. He takes the same principle of development according to the law of Nature or law of God, in the light of Vedantism. "Vox populi vox dei", *i.e.* the voice of the people is the voice of God, because the people are the manifestation of God. No man can attain salvation except by severe self-restraint. Unless he restrains himself, he has no hope of salvation.

If you apply this doctrine, as Aurobindo Ghose applied it, to the situation of this country, what is the result ? The result is that the people want swaraj or self-government. I do not desire to repeat my argument here. Aurobindo has taken care never to define the form of swaraj. Aurobindo has advocated national education, swadeshi, boycott and court of arbitration whereas the Jugantar in its articles headed the Suchona holds that no progress of the country is possible without independence. Talk of Swadeshi, the Jugantar laughs at it. Talk of National Education, arbitration court, the Jugantar says all that is a pastime. No progress of the country can ever take place unless you have absolute independence. This is the essential difference between the principles of the Bande Mataram and the Jugantar. Mr. Das here read articles from the Sandhya, Nabasakti and other papers to show the difference in the tone of their writings.

Mr. Das then went on to discuss some unpublished writings of Aurobindo Ghose. My learned friend, observed counsel, argues that the writing No. 2998 furnishes an index of the man's thoughts. This writing is in Bengali, my friend does not show that it is the handwriting of Aurobindo Ghose.

Mr. Nortion : I suggest that is the handwriting of Sarojini.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Mr. Das : Is certainly looks like a lady's handwriting. I fail to understand how it furnished an index of Sarojini's thoughts. Sarojini is not before Your Honour as a conspirator. Referring to the article "morality of boycott". Mr. Das said "since the man did not publish this, I venture to submit that he did not publish as he thought the article might be misunderstood. How can you convict a man for unpublished writings ? It is for your Honour to say whether these writings can furnish an index of the man's thoughts. I submit they cannot. Because the words and phrases employed do not clearly and completely bring out his ideals. Aurobindo thought the writings might be misunderstood so he did not publish them. Unless you can show that they were secret documents, intended to be circulated amongst the people secretly, you can not draw the inference that the writings supply an index of man's thoughts. I ask your Honour to interpret the point charitably. These writings were not published anywhere. Aurobindo could publish them easily. They are open to this charitable construction that since Aurobindo feared they might be misunderstood, he did not publish them. I ask your Honour to accept the charitable construction. The writings do not bear the meaning which my learned friend sought to put into it".

Mr. Das read a long unpublished article by Aurobindo Ghosh entitled "What is extremism". Referring to a sentence "the law was made for man and not man for the law", the Judge asked if each person was entitled to pass his own judgment on the law.

Mr. Das. emphatically replied "yes". After all he continued, the principle of a man's life must be guided by his own conscience.

Mr. Norton, interrupting, asked how the societies were to exist ?

Mr. Das continuing with his argument put the question "is it not the same view which obtains in other countries with regard to passive resistance ? Have not the people often dis-

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

obeyed the provisions of the law and taken the penalty ?"

Mr. Norton : Not on the ground that the law is wrong.

Mr. Das : That is Aurobindo's view. Proceeding Mr. Das said that Aurobindo put it on the ground of organic unity between the government and the people. They were not judging the man on account of his ideals. So far as the infringement of the law was concerned it was the same in other countries. The government does a certain thing and the people say it is wrong and unjust. If they are fined, they are prepared to pay the fine.

In language of Aurobindo you have got here an authority which has not sprung from the nation as a part of its organism. The government has not sprung here from within the people as the government of the other countries.

No one can gainsay the truth of that; Aurobindo never hesitated to put that forward over and over again. I object to the government of this country not because it is an autocratic government, not because it is not a democratic government or of its particular actions which are criticised by others. My objection is based on philosophy; that this government has not sprung from the people as a part of an organism.

Aurobindo's argument was based on the ground of "utility". And after all, counsel declared, the basis of all legislation in England was utility; something which helped the growth and development of the nation. That was the claim of the Government. We pass this law because it is in the interests of the people, and the interests of the people, counsel said, could not be considered apart from the development of the Nation.

Counsel read out some further passages from the article where Aurobindo discussed the methods by which they were to attain the ideal of freedom. Commenting on this counsel said if a bomb was brought to Aurobindo and he was ashed "shall I throw this at the first Englishman I come across ? Aurobindo would say "Will this accomplish the great ideal" ? The answer,

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

counsel said, woulh necessarily be "no" it would not produce the desired effect.

His Honour : If effective, use it ?

Mr. Das : If the oppression increases to such an extent and people are so united together, and have got such resource at their back that they think they can fihht the Government in battle as it were they may do it, not now.

His Honour : He goes back to the utilitarian method if you are strong enough to fight.

Mr. Das : Yes, that is the whole trend of his arhument. Proceeding Mr. Das repeated his former argument regarding the methods advocated by Aurobindo, insisting on the point that according to Aurobindo violent methods were bad and peaceful methods were good. In the parahraph discussing the methods, which counsel read. Aurobindo was tahing each particular ideal and probing it in order to test its truth or otherwise. He was discussing the best ideal. Counsel read a sentence regarding one of the means discussed by Aurobindo which ran "whether it is worthy of a great people who is struggling to be" counsel called His Honour's attention to this question put by Aurobindo.

Counsel continued : If there was section in the Penal Code—which fortunately there was not—that the preaching of National freedom meant sedition, Aurobindo's answer would be, "nevertheless I must do it. I cannot help it. It is within me and that is what I owe to myself and my God".

Referring to another passage where after discussing certain questions Aurobindo said "that result will be anarchy" counsel said he was surprised at Mr. Norton who was an English scholar saying that he meant anarchist's outrages. He challenged Mr. Norton to point out from the writings of any English writer that the term "anarchy" has been used to mean "anarchist's outrages".

"Anarchy" counsel said meant "disorder" and Aurobindo

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

was referring to a sort of social chaos.

Counsel read some further passages with the object of showing that metaphors used by Aurobindo were taken by Mr. Norton literally. When he spoke of sacrificing their lives for the country, Aurobindo meant that they should suffer. Referring to the expression "Manuring the soil with their blood" counsel asked if such a thing was possible, it was a mere metaphor. He exhorted the people to suffer to the last extremity. What would happen, counsel asked, if passive resistance could be so well organised that all the people refused to pay taxes. It was not a very pleasurable subject to deal with, but counsel said one could well imagine that there would be firing of guns and the result of that would be that the people would be weltering in blood.

Proceeding Mr. Das said he was outlining a passive resistance which would be impossible to reach, but the man who was writing was pushing a wrong point to its logical conclusion. The point he had fixed his attention on was the method and the ideal. The point he was pursuing was whether it was effective and consistent with the traditions of the country. No taxation could grow out of subjection unless it was prepared to suffer. The reference to blood and darkness and death, counsel averred, was figurative. If it led to disorder even then it was welcome because it helped to attain the development they were seeking. It did not help Mr. Norton in thinking that it referred to bombs, ammunition or any other thing.

Referring to the word revolution which appeared in a passage in the article, counsel said, that this did not have the same meaning as the French Revolution. The word was used in the sense of peaceful revolution.

Proceeding with his argument counsel said "If Your Honour looks at the dominant notes in the unpublished writings it is perfectly in accord with the real nature of Aurobindo's writings. If you take hold of a word here and a paragraph there you will not get the real intention. Your Honour must read that articles. Counsel referred to another article from

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

which Mr. Norton quoted the lines of Wordsworth incorporated in the article "who would free themselves must themselves strike the blow".

Commenting on this Mr. Das said: "My friend seems to think that it is indicative of bombs. If Your Honour reads the whole article you will find that it is written in appreciation of Rash Behary Ghose's speech delivered at the Congress. The author quotes this particular line of poetry to support the contention that Mr. Ghose put forward that nations by themselves are made.

Counsel next dealt with the "sweets' letter". He said, "Your Honour will find that having regard to the circumstances as disclosed in the evidence of this case. Your Honour cannot accept the document as being in the hand-writing of Barindra Kumar Ghose, or that it was sent to Aurobindo Ghose. What does it show? The letter is supposed to have been written by one brother to another at Surat. Therefore if this letter is genuine both the brothers were at Surat at that time. I submit that it is utterly improbable, assuming that both the brothers are conspirators, that one brother should write to another brother in this way. There they could have talked to each other, explained their thoughts—each to the other—without writing at all. The letter states "We must have sweets all over India ready made for emergency. I wait here for your answer". The case for the prosecution is that Barin used to address Aurobindo as "shejda". Did Barin forget this when writing this letter? He writes "Dear brother". In this country no younger brother would write to any elder brother, as "Dear brother" except to the eldest brother.

Judge: What do they write?

Mr. Das:—Mejda, Shejda, etc. only the eldest brother is addressed as a brother. The fact that both the brothers being at Surat, Barin wrote to Aurobindo is extremely improbable.

I draw Your Honour's attention to the fact that Barin signs "Barindra Kumar Ghose". My learned friend says that

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Aurobindo and Barindra are Europeanised. But Barin came to England at the very early age of one year. I left England 15 years ago, I do not know whether the custom has changed there. But when I was in England I noticed that a brother never set out his full name when writing to another brother.

Judge : I would not put my full name, I would omit my surname.

Mr. Das : Nobody would sign like that considering the probabilities, I submit that when a brother desires to communicate something to another brother, the proper form of signing his name is not to give the full name like Barindra Kumar Ghose.

Mr. Das continuing said, "this sweets' Letter is taken with Aurobindo and treasured down. It is brought to Calcutta back again. It is kept at 23, Scotts Lane for a couple of months and Police are lucky enough to find the letter at 48, Grey Street. It is grossly improbable. I submit that under the circumstances, Your Honour will hesitate to accept this as evidence and proof against Aurobindo Ghose".

Mr. Das here read from the evidence of Mr. Greagan. Counsel commenting on the evidence said, on the 2nd May, not only the 48, Grey Street, was searched, but the other houses were searched as well. All the articles found at the searches were sent to the Park Street Thana. There is no reason why an exception should be made with regard to 48, Grey Street. The documents of 15, Gopi Mohon Dutta's Lane, and the garden were both sent to the Park Street Thana.

Mr. Das then referred to the great confusion in the evidence of the Police witnesses with regard to the finding and examination of the letter at the thana.

Mr. Das : There is just another point about the "sweets" which is this—Your Honour will find that the number of the bundle was subsequently added to Mr. Greagan in his cross-examination says "The letters might have come out of the envelopes". I submit that the "sweets' letter" could not have

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

been in the bundle. The number of the letters in the documents must at least be 64. There were 64 letters and 20 envelopes.

Mr. Das referred to the evidence of several other witnesses and commented on them, after which he summed up. He said, "I must thank your Honour and gentlemen assessors for the very kind and patient hearing you have given me throughout the case. My only wish was that the task might have fallen on other hands to place this case before the Court; but as it fell on my hands I did all I possibly could to place the evidence in this case before the Court in a connected form. There is one point which struck me at the outset of this case but I did not refer to it so long, as I thought it could be dealt with mere conveniently and appropriately after I had finished dealing with evidence oral and documentary on the record. Your Honour will find that my learned friend's case is that Aurobindo is the head of this conspiracy. He has credited Aurobindo with vast intellectual attainments and with vast powers of organisation and his case was that he was directing this conspirary and working from behind. Now it is with reference to this that I make my submission before Your Honour, that having regard to the nature of the conspiracy which has been established by the evidence if, it has been established at all—it is impossible that Aurobindo could ever have believed that conspiracy was likely to succeed. If you say that Aurobindo is not gifted with the intellectual powers with which you have credited him that is another matter. But if you say that he is all that you have been kind enough to say he is and concomittant with that he is the head of the conspiracy and is directing the conspiracy my answer to that is, the conspiracy of such a nature that it is impossible to believe that Aurobindo could ever have thought in his mind that it could succeed. My learned friend has referred to the thousand and one ramifications of that conspiracy and he has argued that there was a conspiracy from Calcutta to Tuticorin and other places and in order, to substantiate this vast conspiracy as it were, he has not hesitated to bring a charge of conspiracy against persons of whom there is not the slightest evidence on record to show that they were in any way

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

connected with it. I ask you to disregard all that; the conspiracy is in my learned friend's imagination; I do not for a moment suggest that he does not believe it to be true; I don't suggest that he does not believe every word of what he has said and that he has no misgivings on the point. I wholly concede that he fully believed in the conspiracy which he has put forward before the Court and the only way I can explain that and the only suggestion that I can make is that he has been under the tutelage of the police for a long time and the police have poisoned his mind during the last ten months and no doubt he sincerely believed in it and put it forward before the Court.

But the evidence is entirely different. From the evidence as is furnished by the confessions in this Court—confessions upon which the prosecution relies—you will find that it is a childish conspiracy—a toy-revolution. It is impossible that Aurobindo could ever have believed in his heart of hearts that by bombing one or two Englishmen, or some Englishmen at different places, they would have been able to subvert the British Government. If you credit him with intellectual powers and say that he has a brilliant mind, it is not open he was the leader of a childish conspiracy and a toy-revolution. That is the difficulty which comes at the very threshold of this case. Either drop the suggestion that it is because of his intellectual powers because of his eminent qualities with which he is credited that you want the Court to believe that he was the leader of the conspiracy; or the other theory that he was in fact the leader of the conspiracy, and of this alleged revolutionary project. Apart from that suggestion if you turn to the evidence against Aurobindo, my answer is that the confessions exonerate him. If it is argued that the watch witnesses and the other witnesses have proved conclusively that there has been association between Aurobindo and the conspirators, I submit that that evidence is such that you can't place the slightest reliance upon it; not only that, but that under the circumstances one could only expect the evidence to be of such character. If the Government takes into its head to believe that there is a vast conspiracy which is threatening the stability of the government, it is common knowledge, that you do come across spies who give

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

false evidence. I shall just read a passage from a book written by an eminent Judge. "The government under those circumstances have spies who wriggle into the case, causes drop into families, abstract correspondence and forge letters". Therefore the evidence given before you is evidence that you can expect in a case like this. It seems to me if you consider the evidence carefully and apply the different tests I have suggested and submitted for consideration I have hardly any doubt that you will reject that evidence as untrustworthy. Is it argued that in the different letters that have been put forward there is a case against Aurobindo, that these letters show that Aurobindo is implicated in any conspiracy whatsoever? My answer is that the letters themselves don't show anything of the kind. It is my learned friend's interpretation on those letters; and in some case in regard to Aurobindo's connection with certain boys that interpretation has been of such a character that one can hardly resist the temptation of calling it ridiculous, reminding one of the case of Mrs. Bardell against Pickwick. He reads a document and imports into that document, but which have evolved out of friend's inner conscience. If you read the documents as they are, having regard to the circumstances under which they were written, I venture to submit before you, that there is hardly any doubt, whatever may be the view, that those documents do not bring the guilt home to Aurobindo Ghose with reference to any of the charges brought against him.

My further submission is that my learned friend to a certain extent realised that and he said out of despair as it were, 'never mind the letters, never mind the evidence but look at the probability, look at the man's thought'. It was in that view that he but before you the different newspapers and the charge of conspiracy and wholesale conspiracy against many men of light and leading in this country. 'Read the Bande Mataram, read the different speeches, and read the other newspapers—my friend says that you must read the other papers because they are all linked together and you discover what his thoughts were. If you analyse those speeches and writings and if you find an indication that the man was putting forward before the

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

country, the ideal of freedom, you must take it for granted that he was also in favour of applying bombs, of secret societies and such other means as some of the evidence in this case discloses'. My submission to you is—I made it before and I do so again—that these papers and the writings and speeches are not legal evidence in the case at all, but if you do take them you find unmistakable indication that whatever may be Aurobindo's views, he is not guilty of the charges brought against him. I have placed before Your Honour the letter of the 13th August 1905. I read to you the whole of that letter and commented on it and I explained to you what the different thoughts in that letter are 'I say, as I have said in my statement, that ever since I came to Calcutta from Baroda, I never for one single moment deviated from the principles laid down in that latter. I have said I never took any part in politics. I have said in my written statement, whatever the nature of my activities, be they political, social or religious, that throughout the whole course of my activities, I never for one single moment deviated from the principle laid down in that letter of 13th August. The whole of my case before you is this. If it is suggested that I preached the ideal of freedom, to my country which is against the law, I plead guilty to the charge. If that is the law here I say I have done that and I request you to convict me. But do not impute to me crimes that I am not guilty of; deeds against which my whole nature revolts, and which having regard to my mental capacity are something which could never have been perpetrated by me. If it is an offence to preach the ideal of freedom, I admit having done it—I have never disputed it. It is for that, that I have given up all the prospects of my life. It is for that, that I came to Calcutta to live for it and to labour for it. It has been the one thought of my waking hours, the dream of my sleep. If that is my offence, there is no necessity to bring witness into the box to depose to different things in connection with that. Here am I and I admit it. My whole submission before the Court is this. Let not the scence enacted in connection with the sedition trial of the Bande Matram be enacted over again, and let the whole trial go into side-issue. If that is my offence let it be so stated and I am cheerful to bear any

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

punishment. It pains me to think that crimes I could never have thought of or deeds repellent to me, and against which my whole nature revolts, should be attributed to me and that on the strength, not only of evidence on which the slightest reliance cannot be placed, but on my writings which breathe and breathe only of that high ideal which I felt I was called upon to preach. I have done that and there is no question that I have ever denied it. I have adopted the principles of the political philosophy of the West and I have assimilated that to the immortal teachings of Vedantism. I felt I was called upon to preach to my country to make them realise that India had a mission to perform in the committee of nations. If that is my fault you can chain me, imprison me, but you will never get out of me a denial of that charge. I venture to submit under no section of the law do I come for preaching that ideal of freedom and with regard to the deeds with which I have been charged, I submit there is no evidence on record and it is absolutely inconsistent with everything that I taught, that I wrote and with every tendency of my mind discovered in the evidence."

My appeal to you therefore is that a man like this who is being charged with the offences imputed to him stands not only before the bar in this Court but stands before the bar of the High Court of History and my appeal to you is this : That long after this controversy is hushed in silence, long after this turmoil, this agitation ceases, long after he is dead and gone, he will be looked upon as the poet of patriotism, as the prophet of nationalism and the lover of humanity. Long after he is dead and gone his words will be echoed and reechoed not only in India, but across distant seas and lands. Therefore I say that the man in his position is not only standing before the bar of this Court but before the bar of the High Court of History. The time has come for you, sir, to consider your judgement and for you, gentlemen, to consider your verdict. I appeal to you, sir, in the name of all the traditions of the English Bench that forms the most glorious chapter of English History. I appeal to you in the name of all that is noble, of all the thousand principles of law which have emanated from the

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

English Bench, and I appeal to you in the name of the distinguished Judges who have administered the law in such a manner as to compel not only obedience, but the respect of all those in whose cases they had administered the law. I appeal to you in the name of the glorious chapter of English History and let it not be said that an English Judge forgets to vindicate justice. To you, gentlemen, I appeal in the name of the very ideal that Aurobindo preached and in the name of all the traditions of our country; and let it not be said that two of his own countrymen were overcome by passions and prejudices and yielded to the clamour of the moment.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

6

The Karmayogi

A whole year in prison, in Alipur most of the time; in the eyes of the outside world, a year of bleak or baneful incarceration. Yet, for Sri Aurobindo himself, the jail had been no cage of confinement, but a veritable Yogashram were Purushottama had befriended him, and had sported as Guru, companion and master. Thus had Sri Aurobindo's "enemies", by sending him to prison, only opened to him the doors of sudden enlightenment and felicity. And it had always been like that, for the highest good had come to Sri Aurobindo from his socalled "enemies"—and now he had no "enemy" in the world, the world had no meaning whatsoever.

Even in prison, then, for a soul unhorizoned like his there could be no real confinement. But when on acquittal the human body too was freed from captivity, he had to act a human role and speak in human accents. He knew that, on his arrest, his sister Sarojini had appealed for funds because, having "taken a vow of poverty in the service of the Motherland", he had no means of engaging the services of a barrister, and she had therefore been driven to the necessity of relying upon the public spirit and generosity of her countrymen on his behalf. The response had been good, and numberless people, known and unknown, had been with him in his hour of tribulation and trial. He therefore wrote a week after his release to the Bengalee this letter of thanksgiving :

. . . The love which my countrymen have heaped upon

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

me in return for the little I have been able to do for them, amply repays any apparent trouble or misfortune my public activity may have brought upon me. I attribute my escape to no human agency, but first of all to the protection of the Mother of us all who has never been absent from me but always held me in Her arms and shielded me from grief and disaster, and secondarily to the prayers of thousands which have been going up to Her on my behalf ever since I was arrested. If it is the love of my country which led me into danger, it is also the love of my countrymen which has brought me safe through it.

Love was the one sovereign reality. Love of the country, love of India the Mother, love that had bled at the sight of the Mother in bondage, this love had led him to dare danger and difficulty; and his countrymen's love—the infinite love of his numberless brothers and sisters—welling up to the mighty Mother had made Her take him in Her arms, shield him from defeat and despair, and brought him safely through the ordeal. Patriotism was but a form of love, and suffering itself was a means to the awakening of the love Divine.

Sri Aurobindo was "free", the bureaucracy had been humbled, and his friends were elated. But as for Sri Aurobindo himself, he had no cause for exultation, he could have no sense of victory; there was only a deep calm, a fecund serenity that seemed poised for some new action. Bengal—and all India—had suffered a dismal change during the twelve months of his incarceration. A political paralysis seemed to be creeping over the country drying up the blood-streams of national life. What had happened to the promised Dawn? Where were the accredited tribunes of the people? Why were fewer and fewer political meetings held, and why were they attended —not by tens of thousands as before, but only by a few hundred? How had such listlessness and resignation seized the body and soul of the people of Bengal, the people of India?

But Sri Aurobindo wouldn't feel defeated or disspirited.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

He started holding meetings, even if they should be but poorly attended. He held discussions with leaders, he waited for the inner call. Then, suddenly, something—something quite extraordinary—happened. He was invited to Uttarpara, not far from Calcutta, to speak under the auspices of the Dharma Rakshini Sabha. On 30 May he went by train to Uttarpara, where he was received by the local Zemindar, and in the evening, Sri Aurobindo was ta' en in a procession to the place of the meeting on the banks of the Ganges. The audience numbered over ten thousand, and he was the sole speaker and was heard with rapt and reverent attention. He had intended at first to speak on the Hindu Religion, but as he sat there a word came to him, a word he had to speak to the Indian nation. In fact, the word had come to him in jail, and he must now speak it to the people. And so he rose to address the gathering that was thus uniquely privileged to hear first the "word" meant for the whole nation. He took a quick backward glance at recent events, the deportations, the thinning of the ranks of the nationalists, the drastic change in the political climate :

> . . . now that I have come out, I find all changed. One who always sat by my side and was associated in my work is a prisoner in Burma; . . . I looked round when I came out, I looked round for those to whom I had been accustomed to look for counsel and inspiration. I did not find them. There was more than that. When I went to jail, the whole country was alive with the cry of Bande Mataram, alive with the hope of a nation, the hope of millions of men who had newly risen out of degradation. When I came out of jail I listened for that cry, but there was instead a silence. A hush had fallen on the country and men seemed bewildered; for instead of God's bright heaven full of the vision of the future that had been before us, there seemed to be overhead a leaden sky from which human thunders and lightnings rained.

The arrests and trials and heavy sentences and barbarous deportations—the "human thunders and lightnings"!—were

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

meant to crush the spirit of the people, and this tidal wave of repression and the false logic behind it provoked even Morley to protest in these terms :

> That's the Russian argument; by packing off train-loads of suspects to Siberia, we'll terrify the anarchists out of their wits, and all will come out right. That policy did not work out brilliantly in Russia, and did not save Russia from a Duma, the very thing that the Trepoffs and the rest of the 'offs' "deprecated and detested".

But the "men on the spot"—the bureaucracy in India—had had their way, and the lights had gone out, and a pall and a silence had descended on the people. When Sri Aurobindo had last come to Uttarpara—that was over a year ago—Bepin Pal had made a memorable speech. He had then come out of the Buxar jail, and he had given the word that had come to him in jail from God. Sri Aurobindo too had been initiated in jail, and he would now give the Word to the world.

After this exordium, Sri Aurobindo went on to describe the circumstances of his arrest, his initial sense of defeat, the first hint of the Divine purpose behind his removal from the political scene, the reading of the Gita, the Vision of Narayana—the blissful experience of Vasudeva everywhere and in all things. Living with the other accused, he had seen them too hedged in with divinity; and when—after the killing of the approver, Narendranath—Sri Aurobindo had been once more "hurried away to the seclusion of a solitary cell", He had surprised him with more and more of His wonders. In his Baroda days he had first approached God and wanted, not mukti or personal salvation, but only strength for serving and uplifting his people. Again the cry was to be wrung from his heart :

> Then in the seclusion of the jail, of the solitary cell, I asked for it again. I said, "Give me Thy Adesh. I do not know what work to do or how to do it. Give me a message."

Presently, in the communion of Yoga, he had received two

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

messages. First, that it was the Divine intention that Sri Aurobindo should go forth into the world and do His work. Secondly, that the lights he had seen in prison, the truths he had glimpsed, the experiences he had gained in the year of seclusion should help Sri Aurobindo to take to the people the strength of the Sanatana Dharma. But this eternal religion, this Sanatana Dharma, albeit it had been cherished and preserved by the Aryan people in India, was really the possession of all humanity : the "Hindu" religion was also the universal religion, because it embraced the essence of all religions. And he went on to explain :

> If a religion is not universal, it cannot be eternal. A narrow religion, a sectarian religion, an exclusive religion can live only for a limited time and a limited purpose. This (Hinduism) is the one religion that can triumph over materialism by including and anticipating the discoveries of science and the speculations of philosophy. It is the one religion which impresses on mankind the closeness of God to us and embraces in its compass all the possible means by which man can approach God. It is the one religion which insists every moment on the truth which all religions acknowledge that He is in all men and all things, and that in Him we move and have our being . . . It is the one religion which shows the world what the world is, that it is the lila of Vasudeva . . . It is the one religion which does not separate life in any smallest detail from religion, which knows what immortality is, and has utterly removed from us the reality of death.

This was the 'word' that had been put into his mouth to speak to the people of India through the members of the "Society for the Protection of Religion". To protect the Hindu religion was to protect all true religion; it was to be able to assimilate the latest genuine science and philosophy; it was to see the One reality behind the facade of manifold appearance; it was to achieve closeness to God in all acts, thoughts and words; it was, above all, to win victory over the fear of death and embrace the puissance of the soul's immortality.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Only men charged with purpose and power by such a universal, such an eternal, religion—Sanatana Dharma—could succesfully fight the battle of nationalism and win the right to call themselves true children of the Mother. It would be seen that between the Bombay National Union speech of 19 January 1908 and the Uttarpara speech of 30 May 1909, there was much common ground—but there was some significant difference in stress as well. Sri Aurobindo had spoken at Bombay after his Baroda nirvanic experience, while at Uttarpara he spoke after the Alipur experience of Narayana darsan. Yet it was the same man, dedicated to the service of the Mother, the man self-poised and self-giving and exuding iron resolve and tremendous purpose. At Uttarpara, Sri Aurobindo gave the "word" he had been charged to give, but there was still the "work" he had been ordained to do. And the time for it would come too, and the inner Guide would show him the way and the means at the appropriate time.

Along with Sri Aurobindo, some of the other accused too —Bejoy Nag and Nolini Kanta Gupta among them—had been released, and these two young men, "wandering about like floating weeds or moss", used to meet him in the afternoons, and also accompanied him on his short political tour of Assam. Presently, Sri Aurobindo decided to start two weekly papers, the Karmayogin in English and the Dharma in Bengali. The Nationalist party of Bengal had all but disintegrated, and Sri Aurobindo thought he should put new life into it and impart to it a new and steady sense of movement towards a clearly visualised goal. It is important to remember that, although he was offered the editorship of the Bengalee, and although he was promised help if he would re-start the Bande Mataram, Sri Aurobindo resolved rather to break fresh ground by launching journals entirely his own. Accommodation was found at 4, Shyampukur Lane, the press and the office in front and living rooms at the back. The Karmayogin came out on 19 June, and its Bengali counterpart, the Dharma, on 23 August. While staying on at his uncle's place (the Sanjivani office), Sri Aurobindo came to Shyampukur every afternoon and remained there till late at night. Besides Bejoy Nag and

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Nolini, who were permanent residents there, others too regularly joined them. Guru and senior comrade, Sri Aurobindo "taught" them all the time, albeit without their realising what was happening to them :

> Sri Aurobindo had his own novel method of education. It did not proceed by the clock, nor according to a fixed routine or curriculum, that is, there was nothing of the school about it. It went simply and naturally along lines that seemed to do without rules.

His method in teaching a foreign language like French seems to have been to begin straightaway with a classic, for example Moliere's L'Avare. Again, as earlier at Baroda, at Shyampukur too Sri Aurobindo seems to have experimented with "automatic" or mediumistic writing or speech. The young men sitting around Sri Aurobindo in an unlighted room at eight would suddenly hear a voice—Sri Aurobindo's and yet not his—breaking the silence, announcing its identity—perhaps Danton, or Bankim, or Theramenes!—and speaking in English. What did it all amount to? Certainly, supraphysical beings do exist; and some supraphysical beings—or portions or emanations of them—might achieve entry into a ready human medium, make compromises with the materials (body, life, mind) comprising the medium, and try to communicate as from the "beyond" to the "here and now". But such communications are seldom articulate to any definite purpose. There could be exceptions, of course, and Sri Aurobindo himself later claimed that Vivekananda had spoken in the Alipur jail to him and that Rammohan Roy had given the material that went into the book Yogic Sadhan. But these were events of no more than marginal relevance to the "work" Sri Aurobindo had to do.

In its first issue, the Karmayogin described itself as "a weekly Review of National Religion, Literature, Science, Philosophy, etc."; among the contributors would be "Srijut Aurobindo Ghose and others"; the cover illustration was of the Chariot, with Arjuna and Sri Krishna seated in it; and the

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

motto of the journal was the Gita vakya, "Yoga is skill in works". It was to be a national review and not a weekly newspaper. Current events were important only in so far as they tended to help or hinder "the growth of national life and the development of the soul of the nation". Many things went into the life of the nation, and unless they became a total and purposive strength, an integrated dynamic of forward-looking motivation and action, mere varied activity in the divers fields of religion, politics, literature, science, philosophy, industry and commerce might prove to be activity at cross-purposes, and instead of strengthening the nation might actually weaken it and give its movement a wrong or even backward direction. India's political activity had "crept in a channel cut for European or Europeanised minds"; the other streams of national activity were running in "disconnected channels, sluggish, scattered and ineffectual". The one thing needful was to make them all flow together towards a truly worthy national goal. And the Karmayogin would address itself to the task of helping to bring this about :

> There is the sentiment of Indianism, there is not yet the knowledge. There is a vague idea, there is no definite conception or deep insight. We have yet to know ourselves, what we were and may be; what we did in the past and what we are capable of doing in the future : our history and our mission. This is the first and most important work which the Karmayogin sets for itself, to popularise this knowledge. And the second thing is how to use these assets so as to swell the sum of national life and produce the future. It is easy to appraise their relations to the past; it is more difficult to give them their place in the futute. The third thing is to know the outside world and its relation to us and how to deal with it. That is the problem which we find at present the most difficult and insistent, but its solution depends on the solution of the others.

In this supreme task of mobilisation of our faculties on the issue of taking resolute leaps towards the future, the

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

urgent task was the awakening of our brahmatej, which was not what Europeans calls "religion" but rather "spirituality":

> . . . spirituality, the force and energy of thought and action arising from communion with or self-surrender to that within us which rules the world . . . This force and energy can be directed to any purpose God desires for us; it is sufficient to knowledge, love or service; it is good for the liberation of an individual soul, the building of a nation or the turning of a tool. It works from within, it works in the power of God, it works with superhuman energy. The reawakening of that force in three hundred millions of men by the means which our past has placed in our hands, that is our object.

To recapture the spiritual master-key to the solution of life's problems, to recover and integrate with our current life the essential inheritance from the past, to dare and fare forward : that was to be the national programme of action, and the Karmayogin would spell it out in detail and help to engineer the nation's movement towards a bright and purposive future.

The early issues of the Karmayogin carried Sri Aurobindo's English translations of the Isha, Kena and Katha Upanishads. The paper also published his renderings of Kalidasa's Ritusamhara and the first thirteen chapters of Bankin Chandra's Anandamath, besides several of Sri Aurobindo's poems, Who, Baji Prabhou, Epiphany, The Birth of Sin and An Image. Among the constructive prose contributions were several series of essays like A System of National Education, The Brain of India, The National Value of Art and The ideal of the Karmayogin. In some of the later issues appeared a group of Landor-like Converations of the Dead—Dinshaw, Perizade; Turiu, Uriu; Two Souls in Pitri-Lok. In the last of these "conversations", Sri Aurobindo makes the Souls in Pitri-Lok say that, since the sorrows of the world call them, they will return to the earth and re-establish there the reign of joy, beauty and harmony.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Thus, although the spread of interests was commendably wide, it was nevertheless inevitable that the central accent should be on the developing political scene. Papers like the Bengalee and the Indian Social Reformer had chosen to ridicule Sri Aurobindo's Uttarpara speech and the tremendous revelations of his sadhana in prison. What, could the Lord have appeared and spoken—actually spoken—to an under-trial prisoner? Impossible and altogether! The fourth issue of the Karmayogin gave a balanced and detailed rejoinder to these immaculate rationalists of Calcutta and Bombay. Again, when Baikunthanath Sen, President of the Hooghly Conference (6th and 7th September 1909), described Sri Aurobindo as an "impatient idealist", the Karmayogin commented :

> The reproach of idealism has always been brought against those who work with their eye on the future by the politicians who look only to the present. The reproack of impatience is levelled with equal ease and readiness against those who in great and critical times have the strength and skill to build with rapidity the foundations or the structure of the future.

"Ideals" were not idle things but the fruit of noble natures possessed of intensity of purpose :

> Lifted high above the maya of manhood and womanhood is the life of the ideal. Ideals are not accidents. They are the fruit of long tapas and of many lives. Human life is made great in proportion to their intensity.

And running counter to the popular view about sannyasa (renunciation) and the escapist adoration of a past golden age or a future existence other than the terrestrial, Sri Aurobindo affirmed categorically :

> Let us think reverently of the task that is before us. Never in history has there been a greater age than now. Nothing in the past is too high for the present. Sannyasa was not greater than public service. No form of Ishwara could be higher than Bhumia Devi. This Devi we have to

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

realise. Her worship we have to establish. And we may remember that in the form of Gandhari she still signs to the Duryodhanas of this day, as of another long ago, Yato dharmastato Jayah.

We have seen in an earlier chapter (III. vi) how the fiery-soulded Sister Nivedita met Sri Aurobindo at Baroda in 1902, having read earlier with profound admiration his articles in the Indu Prakash. She could see in him even then the same missionary spirit that had animated her own great Master, Swami Vivekananda, and Sri Aurobindo glimpsed in her the Shakti that had made her the inspired author of Kali, the Mother. Returning to Bengal, she gave sustained support to him in his secret work, and in 1903 he appointed her a member of the controlling revolutionary committee of five; and during his first short spell of hectic political activity consequent on the Partition of Bengal, Nivedita kept close and continuous contact with him. His arrest and the rounding up of the revolutionaries proved a setback to the cause, but she was nothing daunted, and she wasn't disspirited either. Returning from Europe to India in July 1909, Nivedita was delighted that Sri Aurobindo was free again, and she promptly organised celebrations in her school. And she wondered at the marvellous change—the transformation—that had come over Sri Aurobindo. His face seemed to be all eyes and little else, eyes burning with the intensity and power that had become his during his sadhana in prison. This man with the tight-drawn skin and possessed of rock-like calm and exuding infinite assurance was no mere politician; he was the Life Force itself, the soul's sprout from the soil of India pointing fiercely towards the future. In the words of her biographer, Lizelle Raymond, in The Dedicated :

> Nivedita thought she could still hear the voice of Swami Vivekananda stirring up the masses : "Arise, Sons of India! Awake!" That had been the first phase of the struggle. Now this life-giving cry was repeated differently, because the effort required in the changing circumstances was no longer identical; but the source of it was still the

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

same! Now the new order was that every individual should become a sadhak of the nation—a seeker —so that "the One could find Himself and manifest Himself in every human being, in all humanity". Aurobindo Ghose . . . was, as Nivedita understood him, the successor to the spiritual Masters of the past, offering the source of his inspiration for all to drink from in Yogic solitude. Since his imprisonment at Alipur, Aurobindo Ghose was no longer a fighter but a Yogi.

In the meantime, repression went on with redoubled ruthlessness, and there was also unending talk about the coming "reforms". Sri Aurobindo could hardly help taking note of these in his speeches and writings. In his Beadon Square speech on 13 June, Sri Aurobindo commented on both. Thus of the notorious "Sunset Regulation" :

> It appeared that we were peaceful citizens until sunset, but after sunset we turned into desperate characters,—well, he was told, even half an hour before sunset; apparently even the sun could not be entirely trusted to keep us straight, We had, it seems, stones in our pockets to throw at the police and some of us, perhaps, dangle bombs in our chadders.

In his comprehensive speech on 17 July at the annual meeting of the Howrah People's Association, he spoke fervently on the "right of association" and on the ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity, and mounted an attack on the bureaucratic moves to brand rights and ideals as offences and crimes. And Sri Aurobindo could be devastatingly sarcastic when he wanted :

> . . . there was the imagination of a very highly imaginative police which saw hidden behind the lathi the bomb. Now nobody ever saw the bombs. But the police were quite equal to the occasion; they thought there might be bombs. And what if there were not ? Their imagination was quite equal to realising any bomb that could not be materialised . . . The police suspected that the lathi was the father of the bomb. Their procedure was simple with the simplicity

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

of the highest detective geniuns. When they heard of a respectable-sized dacoity, they immediately began to reason it out. They said, "Now why are there so many dacoities in the land ? Obviously, the lathi fathered the bomb and the bomb fathered the dacoities. Who have lathis ? The Samitis. Therefore it is proved. The Samitis are the dacoits". Our efficient police have always shown a wonderful ability. Generally when a dacoity is committed, the police are nowhere near . . . They only come up when the dacoity is long over and say, "Well this is the work of the National Volunteers".

In his Kumartuli speech, again, Sri Aurobindo described with playful irony his varied "friend"—the Hare Street friend, the Police-wallah, the Madras friend—and replied to their "friendly" suggestions. The Madras friend (the Indian Patriot) has advised Sri Aurobindo to eschew politics and take to Sannyasa; the police would very much like him not to open his mouth "too much"; and the Hare Street friend (the Englishman) had asked Sri Aurobindo to devote himself to literature and religion, and not to make speeches on Swadeshi and Boycott. Yes, indeed, said Sri Aurobindo in reply; he was devoting himself to literature and religion; he was writing on Swaraj and Swadeshi, and that was a form of literature, and he was discoursing on Swaraj and Swadeshi, and that was part of his religion !

As for the 'Minto-Morley' Reforms that were dangling in all their insubstantiality in the mid-air of political speculation, Sri Aurobindo had little doubt, with his intimate knowledge of the British people and the variety of their manufactures, that the Reforms belonged to the category of Brummagem goods . . . a synonym for shoddy"; they would only throw "an apple of fresh discord among them"; they were hollow and pretentious, and "this offer of conciliation is one hand and the pressure of repression in the other" was a dangerously repressive policy. It was the classic policy of "In the one hand there is the sugar plum and in the other there is repression", as a statesman was to point out on the floor of the Indian Legis-

CC-0.Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

lative Assemly nearly twenty years later. Sri Aurobindo therefore rightly insisted that the Reforms were a mockery and a trap, and that the cooperation expected from the people was not what true cooperation should be but merely a pitiful parody of the same :

> Cooperation can only be given if the Government which is now alien becomes our own, if the people have a share in it, not merely in name, not merely by the right of talk in the Legislative Council, not merely by apparent concessions, but by getting some measure of control in the matter of legislation, in the expenditure of taxes they are called upon to pay for the maintenance of the administration . . .

But, then, there were the Moderates all agog with excitement in anticipation of the "coming Reforms". Any sporadic act of violence by an Indian—whether in England or in India —threw the Moderates into flutters of apprehension last the Reforms should after all fail in materialise. Sri Aurobindo had thus to cross swords both with the bureaucracy and with the forces of Moderatism. Thus, when Gokhale made a speech in Poona in connection with the murders of Curzon Wylie and Lalcaca, the Karmayogin came out with a slashingly sarcastic editorial which concluded with these pointed and envenomed words :

> He (Gokhale) publishes himself now as the righteous Bibhishan who, with the Sugrives, Angads, and Hanumans of Madras and Allahabad, has gone to join the Avatar of Radical absolutism in the India Office, and ourselves as the Rakshasa to be destroyed by this Holy Alliance.

An intimate knowledge of the Ramayana is needed to appreciate the subtlety of Sri Aurobindo's assailment of the Moderatist position. In the words of Prema Nandakumar, "the whole point of the indictment is that Morley (or the British Government) was not an avatar like Rama, and Gokhale and his friends erred by imagining themselves in the righteous role of Vibhishana and the other allies of Rama, and erred even more by taking the Tilaks, Bepin Pals and

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Aurobindos to be of the tribe of Ravana".

Like his countrymen, Sri Aurobindo too did not fail to recognise the finer elements in Gokhale's mind and character; he actually described the Poona leader in the Kumartuli speech as "one who had served and made sacrifices for the country." But when Gokhale denounced the ideals and activities of the Nationalists, when he said that "the ideal of independence was an ideal which no sane man could hold", when he described the people who advocated the peaceful methods of passive resistance as men who cut of . . . . . do not speak out the thought that is in their hearts, it became then incumbent on Sri Aurobindo to accept the challenge and enter the fray. In both his College Square and Kumartuli speeches of July-August 1909, Sri Aurobindo replied to Gokhale and incidently went again into the implications of the policy of Passive Resistance advocated by the Nationalists :

> This was a very dangerous teaching which Mr. Gokhale introduced into his speech, that the ideal of independence —whether we call it Swaraj, or autonomy or Colonial Self-Government, because these two things in a country circumstanced like India meant in practice the same—cannot be achieved by peaceful means; Mr. Gokhale knows or ought to know that this ideal which he decries is deeply rooted in the minds of thousands of people and cannot be driven out. He has told the ardent hearts which cherish this ideal of independence and are determined to strive towards it that their ideal can only be achieved by violent means. If any doctrine can be dangerous, if any teacher can be said to have uttered words dangerous to the peace of the country, it is Mr. Gokhale himself. We have told the people that there is a peaceful means of achieving independence in whatever form we aspire to it. We have said that by self-help, by passive resistance, we can achieve it . . . . Passive resistance means two things. It means, first, that in certain matters we shall not cooperate with the Government of this country until it gives us what we consider our rights. Secondly, if we are persecuted, if the plough of repression

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

> is passed over us, we shall meet it not by violence, but by suffering, by passive resistance, by lawful means. We have not said to our young men, "When you are repressed, retaliate"; we have said, "suffer" . . . We are showing the people of this country in passive resistance the only way in which they can satisfy their legitimate aspiration without breaking the law and without resorting to violence.

As for the charge of "cowardice" implied in Gokhale's Poona speech, Sri Aurobindo said that, although he was himself no model of courage, "residence for the best part of a year in a solitary cell had been an experience which took away all the terrors of transportation", and the conclusion he would draw from his own experience was simply this :

> Imprisonment in a righteous cause was not so terrible as it seemed, suffering was not so difficult to bear as our anticipations made it out. The prize to which they aspired was the greatest to which a nation could aspire and if a price was asked of them, they ought not to shrink from paying it.

The Nationalists were not, then, the mad men conjured by the imagination of the Moderates; nor were they cowards or men of double-talk eager merely to save their skins. On the contrary, they were genuine patriots who were ready, if required, to pay the price for the Swaraj they thirsted for and must obtain at all cost.

Repression, repression, hundred-limbed repression might prevail for the nonce, but that would not silence or cow down the Nationalists. What, after all, was repression ? Soon after coming out of prison, Sri Aurobindo articulated a significant answer in the course of his Jhalakati speech on 23 June :

> . . . it is a strange idea, a foolish idea, which men have . . . that a nation which has once risen, once has been called up by the voice of God to rise, will be stopped by mere physical repression . . . Storm has swept over us today. I saw it come, I saw the striding of the storm-blast and the rush

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

of the rain and as I saw it an idea came to me. What is this storm that is so mighty and sweeps with such fury upon us ? And I said in my heart, "It is God who rides abroad on the wings of the hurricane . . . ." A storm like this has swept also our national life. That too was the manifestation of the Almighty. We were building an edifice to be the temple of our Mother's worship . . . . It was then that He came down upon us . . . He shook the roof with his mighty hands and part of the building was displaced and ruined. Why has He done this ? Repression is nothing but the hammer of God that is beating us into shape so that we may be moulded into a mighty nation and an instrument for his work in the world. We are iron upon his anvil and the blows are showering upon us not to destroy but to re-create. Without suffering there can be no growth. It is not in vain that Aswini Kumar Dutt has been taken from his people. It is not in vain that Krishna Kumar Mitra has been taken from us and is rotting in Agra jail. It is not in vain that all Maharashtra mourns for Tilak at Mandalay. It it He, not any other, who has taken them and his ways are not the ways of men . . .

Great as Aswini Kumar Dutt and Tilak were, even without them—or without others who might be taken away—the movement would still go on, for God was the real leader, and He was irresistible. Had not Sri Aurobindo seen through the jail and the jail-keeper, the judge and the assessors, the confronting lawyers Mr. Norton and Chittaranjan, the witnesses and the visitors, and seen behind them all but one visage, one form, one manifestation ? Temporary set-backs should not frighten the true sadhaka in the Temple of Patriotism. Set-backs were natural, set-backs were even inevitable in a high endeavour like the fight for freedom. But the national resolve must prevail in the end :

> What is it that we seek ? We seek the fulfilment of our life as a nation . . . that is why God has sent us into the world to fulfil Him by fulfilling ourselves in our individual life, in the family, in the community, in the nation, in humanity . . .

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

> Our object, our claim is that we shall not perish as a nation, but live as a nation. Any authority that goes against this object will dash itself against the eternal throne of justice—it will dash itself against the laws of Nature which are the laws of God, and be broken to pieces.

Sri Aurobindo's life, divided mainly between his uncle Krishna Kumar Mitra's house and the premises of the Karmayogin office, pursued its even course in the weeks and months immediately after his release from prison. In the mornings he sat on the veranda with hands crossed and dressed in dhoti and shirt; and expounded the Gita to the young men who gathered round him day after day. In the evenings, he was at the office in Shyampukur Lane, or away somewhere to speak at a public meeting. But the man of God, the new-gospeller of Sanatan Dharma, the unflinching Nationalist, the eloquent expounder of the Gita, the unconventional teacher of French, the experimenter with mediumistic automatic speech, this Yogi, this Nationalist, this Fighter was also gentleness incarnate in his relations with those near and dear to him. Basanti his cousin has given us this intimate glimpse of Sri Aurobindo at this period of his life :

> I never saw Sri Aurobindo getting angry. He is sitting in the hall and writing. His sandals are lying at a little distance. My mother comes, puts on his sandals and goes up to the terrace to take her constitutional walk. After some time people come to see Sri Aurobindo. He gets up, searches all round for his sandals. In the meantime he sees the aunt and smiles and asks her : "Little aunty ! have you put on my sandals ? There are visitors who have come to see me." The aunt gives him his sandals. That she took them away—that he had to wait—nothing of it made him angry.

And whenever his aunt had to go to the Ganges for a bath, Sri Aurobindo was ready enough to interrupt his own writing and accompany her to the river and back.

Two months after the Karmayogin had been launched, the

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

first issue of its Bengali counterpart, the Dharma, came out on 23 August 1909. It carried as its epigraph the verse from the Gita : yada yadahi dharmasya glanirbhavati Bharata abhyutthanamadharmasya tadatmanam srjamyaham (Whenever Dharma declines and adharma is on the ascendant, O Bharata, it is then I bring about my birth). The professed object of the Dharma was to propagate Sanatana Dharma, the "Eternal Religion". Not "religion" exactly, for dharma really means much more; it is nearer to the essential and unchanging Law of Life, or the Law Divine--for only the Law Divine can both include the essence of all religions while firmly surpassing their temporal limitations. As used by Sri Aurobindo, Sanatana Dharma was an inclusive yet timeless concept, true for all times and therefore true for his time as well :

> Our aim is to spread the eternal religion and, based on that eternal religion, the observance of the religion of the race and the spirit of the age . . . Knowledge, devotion and non-attached activity are the root of an Aryan education; liberality, love, courage, energy, modesty are signs of the Aryan character . . . We have fallen from the ways of our religion, moved away from our goals . . . it should be our first aim to give the entire nation, especially the youth of the country, an adequate education, high ideals and a way of activity that will arouse these Aryan ideals. Till we succeed in doing that the spread of the eternal religion will be like sowing seeds in a barren field.
>
> The performance of the racial religion will make it easier to serve the spirit of the age. This is an age of energy, shakti, and love . . . Entering into and manifesting in the Aryan religion, composed of knowledge, devotion and non-attached action, these same powers are seeking for expansion and self-fulfilment. The signs of that energy of expression are severe austerity, high ideals, and noble action . . .
>
> When the religion of the race and of the time-spirit are fulfilled, the eternal religion will spread and establish itself throughout the world . . . The entire world will come to the Knower of Brahman, who will arise in the Aryan

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

> land . . . It is to bring that day nearer that the Indians are rising, that is why this fresh awakening of Aryan ideas.

There are constants as well as variables in all religions,—and it is the way of all religions progressively to ignore the constants of spirituality and to stratify the variables, even when they have become quite irrelevant, into the pseudo-constants of dogma, ritual and mere superstition. But Sanatana Dharma has a way of meeting, and entering into creative relationship with, both unique racial peculiarities and the peremptory requirements of the Time Spirit. Twentieth century India couldn't ignore the achievements of Western education, science, social and political organisation : nor could it ignore the essential Aryan ideals and virtues. Only an unfaltering grounding in the Spirit would help modern India to be Aryan, to be truly modern, and to fulfil its future role as the Guru of the Nations. Like the Karmayogin, the Dharma too would make the propagation of this message the cardinal aim of its high journalistic endeavour.

During its brief period of life, the Dharma seems to have given something new to Indian journalism. Although Sri Aurobindo never actually addressed a public meeting in Bengali, he had already—by the time he launched the Dharma —won an individual mastery of the language to be able to make an astonishing variety of contributions to the paper : essays on the Upanishads, the Puranas and the Gita (including a rendering of the first two Books), essays on Nationalism, religion and spirituality, essays on subjects like 'The Eight Siddhis', 'Sannyasa and Tyaga', 'National Resurgence and National Hatred' and 'Problems of the Past and Glimpses of the Future'. The Dharma was no doubt meant specially for those who couldn't read the Karmayogin, but the change of medium, the shift to a concentrated regional audience with its own ethos and slant of sensibility, and the resulting larger freedom and intensity of expression must have given to the Dharma a fierce urgency and directness of appeal that perhaps even the Karmayogin lacked.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

While it is beyond the scope of this chapter to attempt a full review of Sri Aurobindo's contributions to the Dharma, it would not be out of place to refer here to one or two essays that throw a revealing light on the direction of his current thinking. In one essay, for example, he warned against the Indian political movement going the way of the West, exploiting hatred and necessarily employing violence. Although in its first stage, politics in India had handled Western methods, soon the second stage came when, "imbued with the spirit of the Divine Law", the main stress was on the adoration of India as the Mother. Politics was not a thing apart from life, but was a part of the Divine Law, and Sri Aurobindo pleaded that our young men should learn to root out hatred from their hearts, for rajasic turbulence in thought, feeling or action must defeat itself in the end. The main requirement was the strength of calm, not the self-defeat of tumult and agitation. Human society had already passed through the largely vital and the largely mental (or rational) stages. The West had tried to translate the concepts of equality, fraternity and liberty into everyday realities—but without enduring success. Mankind must therefore either fare onward towards the heights where the soul (nor the mind) was predominant, or slink back precipitately to mere animality. In another essay, Sri Aurobindo referred to the bullock-cart, the motor-car and the well-built chariot as vehicles symbolic of the tamasic, rajasic and sattwic types of the human personality—but the "Chariot of Jagannath" is yet to come into being :

> The ideal society is the vehicle of the indwelling Godhead of a human aggregate, the chariot for the journey of Jagannath. Unity, Freedom, Knowledge and Power constitute the four wheels of this chariot.

Other societies had been congiomerations of egoistic men, loosely or insecurely held together and threatened by all kinds of inner tensions. But the society of the Future would be a "gnostic community created by delight and the unifying power of self-knowledge and divine knowledge" :

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

> The day Self-born unity will come into being by the harmony and integration of knowledge, devotion and work, as impelled by the Will of the Virat Purusha the Universal Person, on that day the Chariot of Jagannath will come out of the avenues of the world, radiating its light in all directions. Satya Yuga the Age of Truth will descend upon earth; the world of mortal man will become the field for the play of the Divine, the temple-city of God, the metropolis of Ananda.

Sri Aurobindo came out of prison on 6 May 1909 and launched the Karmayogin on 19 June. Clearly, he didn't allow the grass to grow under his feet. Speeches, consultations, exhortations—his mere presence—and now this weekly paper ! The bureaucracy couldn't appreciate the shift in emphasis implied in the change from the Bande Mataram to the Karmayogin. Perhaps a trap—a subtle and dangerous trap—was suspected in the change itself. Chafing at the earlier defeat in their attempt to get Sri Aurobindo convicted and now fuming and fretting because the incendiary author of Bhavani Mandir was back among his young men and was doubtless engaged in some explosive new mischief, the bureaucracy wondered whether it would not be a good idea—since he couldn't be sent to the Andamans—to deport him at least to some inaccessible place. In particular, Sri Aurobindo struck the bureaucracy as a major impediment to India's acceptance of the proposed Reforms, and hence his removal from the political scene seemed an obvious remedy. Coming to know of these bright ideas, Sister Nivedita advised Sri Aurobindo either to go into secrecy or to continue his political activity from outside India. But Sri Aurobindo thought that it would be sufficient if he published a signed letter in the Karmayogin, clearly spelling out his views on the political situation generally and on the controversial Reforms in particular. This "Open Letter to My Countrymen", dated "July 1909", appeared in the issue of 31 July, and presented in bold and clear outline a policy for nationalist India. Sri Aurobindo began with the observation

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

that a public man's position in "India today" was most precarious, and even after his recent acquittal there was no security against a fresh accusation or a recourse to the law of deportation. There were rumours too that a case for his deportation had been submitted to the Government. Sri Aurobindo therefore thought it advisable to address a letter to his countrymen.

> In case of my deportation it may help to guide some who would be uncertain of their course of action, and, if I do not return from it, it may stand as my last will and testament.

The Nationalist Party was very much there still, notwithstanding the blasts of repression; what it needed was a policy and a leader : "the first it may find, the second only God can give if". It was, however, a firm moral ground on which the Nationalist cause had to be reared, then as always :

> The strength of our position is moral, not material .... The whole of the moral strength of the country is with us, justice is with us, Nature is with us. The law of God, which is higher than any human, justifies our action; youth is for us, the future is ours. On that moral strength we must rely for our survival and eventual success.

The ground being so strong, there was no occasion for "rash impatience". There was no virtue in defying the law for its own sake; on the contrary, "a respect for law is a necessary quality for endurance as a nation". Sporadic terrorist outrages had no doubt taken place, but even they were only "the rank and noxious fruit of a rank and noxious policy", and unless the authors of that policy (the alien bureaucracy) turned from their errors, nothing could prevent "the poison-tree from bearing according to its kind". The claim for Swaraj was a moral and spiritual one, and didn't admit of any admixture of hatred :

> We find a bureaucratic administration, we wish to make it

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

> democratic; we find an alien government, we wish to make it indigenous; we find a freign control, we wish to render it Indian. They lie who say that this aspiration necessitates hatred and violence. Our ideal of patriotism proceeds on the basis of love and brotherhood and it looks beyond the unity of the nation and envisages the ultimate unity of mankind. But it is a unity of brothers, equals and free men that we seek, not the unity of master and serf, of devourer and devoured.

Such being the "ends", the "means" had to be inconsonance with them; the big change that had to be brought about would be accomplished through the methods of passive resistance :

> The essence of this policy is the refusal of cooperation so long as we are not admitted to a substantial share and an effective control in legislation, finance and administration.

The strategy of "No control, no cooperation" was but an adaptation relevant to Indian conditions of the classic American war-cry, "No representation, no taxation". And the tactics of boycott, swadeshi, national education merely flowed from the main strategy.

There were, however, difficulties in making the national will articulate in expression and effective in action. A disunited Congress, divided on basic issues of policy and programme, was the first of the impediments. And there was also the question of accepting or rejecting the proposed Reforms. As Sri Aurobindo saw it, there was room for compromise on all questions without a surrender of the basic principles of the Nationalist party. In conclusion, he outlined this six-point programme : persistence, with a strict regard to law, in a peaceful policy of self-help and passive resistance; "No control, no cooperation with the Government"; a rapprochement with the Moderates wherever possible, and the reconstitution of a united Congress; revival of the Boycott movement on an effective basis; extension of the programme to Provinces other than

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Bengal, and ultimately to the whole country; organisation of a system of cooperation which will not contravene the law and will yet enable workers to proceed with the task of self-help and national efficiency.

For all its eminent reasonableness, the "Open Letter" had in no way resiled from the position Sri Aurobindo had held before, but here was a closely-reasoned document that stated the Nationalist point of view with utter clarity, and when he met Nivedita next she told him that the "Letter" had had the desired effect and the Government had dropped the idea of taking action against him, at least for the present. In writing his "Letter", Sri Aurobindo had relied "upon an intuitive perception that the Government would not think it politic or useful to deport him if he left a programme which others could carry out in his absence". He had indeed calculated correctly, and the "Letter" also greatly helped the Nationalist party by giving it both a policy and a programme. Taking advantage of the precarious "freedom" he still enjoyed, Sri Aurobindo led the Nationalist party at the District Political Conference held at Hooghly on the 6th and 7th September 1909. The main question at the Subjects Committee was the issue of acceptance or rejection of the Minto-Morley Reforms. The Nationalists, with their majority, were in a position to throw out the resolution moved by the Moderates, welcoming the Reforms. But the Moderate leaders threatened to secede, and so "to avoid a scission he (Sri Aurobindo) consented to allow the Moderate resolution to pass, but spoke at the public session explaining his decision and asking the Nationalists to acquiesce in it. . . so as to keep some unity in the political forces of Bengal". The Nationalist delegates were understandably disappointed that they were being asked to forego their advantage, but nevertheless they accepted his decision and left the hall so that they wouldn't have to vote either way. The seasoned Moderate leaders thought it strange, and even felt a little humiliated, that having refused to listen to them, the Nationalists should have trooped out in disciplined silence at the bidding of Sri Aurobindo.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

A few days later, the Karmayogin made an assessment of the results of the Hooghly Conference. For one thing, the situation at Hoohhly wasn't strictly comparable to the one at Surat, where the order for the breaking-up of the Congress had to be given. Again, at Hooghly the Nationalists were in a position of commanding strength, and therefore they could the more easily afford to be generous to the other party. Under Sri Aurobindo's lead, the Nationalists were content to adhere to their "main point of securing some definite step in relation to the holding of an united Congress". Proceeding next to attend the Sylhet District Conference, Sri Aurobindo addressed many meetings on the way, and spoke on politics as well as Sanatana Dharma. He was gratified to find that, in that histant part of East Bengal, Nationalism was vigorously alert and alive and Moderatism was practically extinct. As he wrote in the Dharma afterwards, "the people of Sylhet held a conference in the very birth-place of repression and proclaimed Swaraj as their goal and moral force and passive resistence as the means of attaining it".

The growing strength of the Nationalists as well as their apparent willingness to take the Moderates with them encouraged Surendranath Banerjea to make a move to bring the two parties together. This he did at Barisal, at the time of the Provincial Conference. If Banerjea could go to the next session of the Congress at Benares as the head of a United Bengali delegation, the Nationalists becoming his sword-arm or ginger group, he might be able to get the better of the right wing of the Moderates led by Gokhale and his friends. The private conference, however, came to nothing, for there were too many intractable problems to solve. To qualify for delegation to Benares, the Nationalists would have first to accept the undemocratic Constitution imposed on the Congress at Surat, and this Sri Aurobindo was not prepared to do. A "united-Congress", then, seemed to be not possible of realisation; not, certainly, at that stage. The path taken at Hooghly had, after all, led to a blind alley. The Reforms had proved an apple of discord, and had hoodwinked many into a somnolent acquie-

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

science in them. Sri Aurobindo knew better, but as for the Moderates they would feel the bitterness of the fruit only when they came actually to taste it. Such foreknowledge as was his could nevertheless be dismissed as of no consequence by the selfish and the easy-going alike. In that bleak climate of Indian politics, what was Sri Aurobindo to do? A 'Home Rule' movement strictly within the four corners of the existing law?. . .

Sri Aurobindo's brief period of political activity after Alipur—a matter of hardly ten months—saw him grow new dimensions of understanding and farseeing leadership. On the one hand there was the new stress on Sanatana Dharma and on integral national growth, and the hope and conviction that a changed and transformed India would be the Guru of the Nations; and, on the other hand, there was the clear grasp of the deteriorating political situation caused by the incarceration or deportation of the leading Nationalists, the eager anxiety of the Moderates to work the phoney Reforms, and the seething underground discontent finding expression in mere terrorism. Were the Nationalists to fight on two fronts—bureaucratic repression and terrorist activity—and decimate themselves to no purpose? On the one hand, there was the piling up of repressive measure on repressive measure, stifling the free expression of patriotic feeling whether in the press or on the platform; and on the other, there was a succession of daring acts like the killing of Nandalal Banerjea (who had arrested Prafulla Chaki), the attempt on Minto on 13 November 1909... on 21 December. Repression and terrorism fatally incited each other and produced a terrifying chain-reaction. Where was room for honest and forthright Nationalism in such a vicious situation? It is only against such a twilight background of uncertainty that we should try to understand Sri Aurobindo's short spell of evangelism during the last months of 1909 and the opening months of the following year.

Given the curious complex of political forces in the country, the ease with which the alien bureaucracy was apt to get panicky for no reason, and the extreme precariousness of a

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

nationalist politician's life, Sri Aurobindo knew that he might any day be removed from the political scene (or he might himself have to remove himself !). It was part of wisdom to plan one's campaign of action as if one might live to be a centurion; but one had also to hold oneself in readiness to quit the scene any moment whatsoever. The fullness, the ripeness wys all. It was in this mood of the sthitaprajna that Sri Aurobindo made his varied contributions in verse and prose to the pages of the Karmayogin.

But, first, what exactly was 'Karmayoga'? What should be the "Ideal of the Karmayogin"? Sri Aurobindo wrote a series of ten articles on the subject, the first two appearing in the inaugural issue itself. These ten essays have since been collected, rearranged, and published as a book, along with two of Sister Nivedita's contributions, under the title The Ideal of the Karmayogin. Although written in a certain context and for a particular audience, the message is for all and comes to us—especially to the youth of India—with a pointed contemporaneous urgency. In the memorable exordium, Sri Aurobindo states his thesis with a characteristic succinctness and force :

> A nation is building in India today before the eyes of the world . . . the freedom, unity and greatness of India have now become necessary to the world . . . apparently insuperable. We believe God is with us and in that faith we shall conquer.

The Karmayogin's mind is necessarily set on action, on change, or revolutionary transformation; it is not to be merely external or mechanical, but moral and spiritual. Salvation cannot lie in India trying to fabricate a toy model of European freedom, with bicameral legislatures, colourless societies, secularist postures and materialist panaceas. It is not as the "ape of Europe" that Indian society can achieve social renovation, for "it is the spirit alone that saves, and only by becoming great and free in heart can we become socially and polically great and free". Nor is there any sense in counte-

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

nancing the emergence of new sects; they solve nothing, and only add to our problems or give further vicious twists to them. Religion and science, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam and Hinduism, all have got hold of the Truth, some partially and others integrally. Hinduism, of course, is in a class apart :

> In our own (religion), which is the most sceptical and the most believing of all, the most sceptical because it has questioned and experimented the most, the most believing because it has the deepest experience and the most varied and positive spiritual knowledge—that wider Hinduism which is not a dogma or combination of dogmas but a law of life, which is not a social framework but the spirit of a past and future social evolution, which rejects nothing . . . world-religion. This sanatana dharma has many scriptures, Veda, Vedanta, Gita, Upanishad, Darshana, Purana, Tantra, nor could it reject the Bible or the Koran; but its real, most authoritative scripture is in the heart in which the Eternal has His dwelling. It is in our inner spiritual experiences that we shall find the proof and source of the world's Scriptures, the law of knowledge, love and conduct, the basis and inspiration of Karmayoga.

Let the Hindu, let the Indian, look into the secret cavern of his heart and discover the perennial fount of spirituality. Matter needn't be denied, indeed it shouldn't be; but spirituality should be affirmed and accepted and realised as the deeper reality.

"Karmayoga" was simply "the application of Vedanta and Yoga to life". Vedanta and Yoga were nothing forbiddingly esoteric; nor were they limited to India. Already in 1909, they had exceeded their "Asiatic limit" and were beginning to "influence the life and practice of America and Europe". And Vedanta didn't mean a ffight from life, and Yoga wasn't simply a series of exercises :

> "Abandon all", says the Isha Upanishad, "that thou mayest enjoy all, neither covet any man's possession. But verily do

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

> thy deeds in this world and wish to live thy hundred years. . ." The Charioteer of Kurukshetra driving the car of Arjuna over that field of ruin is the image and description of Karmayoga; for the body is the chariot and the senses are the horses of the driving and it is through the blood-stained and mire-sunk ways of the world that Sri Krishna pilots the soul of man to Vaikuntha.

In the particular national context, the Karmayogin had to guard against the only too common tendency to cling to every detail sanctioned by past practice :

> In all life there are three elements, the fixed and permanent spirit, the developing yet constant soul and the brittle changeable body. The spirit we cannot change, we can only obscure or lose; the soul must not be rashly meddled with, must neither be tortured into a shape alien to it, nor obstructed in its free expansion; and the body must be used as a means, not overcherished as a thing valuable for its own sake. We will change no ancient form to an unreasoning love of change, we will keep none which the national spirit desires to replace by one that is a still better and truer expression of the undying soul of the nation.

Nationalism for Sri Aurobindo was a means for enriching and extending life, not for diminishing or destroying it as was attempted later by Fascism and Nazism. Sri Aurobindo clearly pointed out that, once India's nationalism had brought political order and economic prosperity of the country, it should "preserve itself in cosmopolitanism somewhat as the individual preserves itself in the family, the family in the class, the class in the nation, not destroying itself needlessly but recognising a larger interest". A strong nation was one thing, but the totalitarian "god-state" was a very different thing; and the so-called, but really ungodly, god-state could only rise from the grave of the individual. But even the greatest individuals were mere instruments in the hands of the Divine, "inspired Texts (in Carlyle's words) of that divine Book of Revelations, whereof a Chapter is completed from epoch to

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

epoch, and by some named history". Men in themselves were but helpless pieces of straw swaying hither and thither as the vagrant breeze intermittently disturbed them; they were great only to the extent the energy of Mahakali informed and inspired them, and carried them onward by the momentum of its own impulsion. In other words, "the greatness of individuals is the greatness of the eternal Energy within". Ultimately it came to this : the true Karmayogin had the clue to "the stillness of assured sovereignty which commands the harmony of life"; in that calm, "right knowledge comes"; and "right knowledge becomes the infallible source of right action. Yogah karmasu kausalam". Having tempered, purified and perfected the instrument, the Karmayogin would do wisely to leave it in God's hands. Ridden by the Spirit within, the actions of the Karmayogin might puzzle the ordinary man. A wise passivity today, fire and brimstone tomorrow; in either case, he would but be following the inner Light of which others might be totally unaware. There is, of course, very real danger in all and sundry talking about their intuitions and inner voices and proclaiming themselves to be agents of the Divine. Sri Aurobindo was therefore careful to add that, not everybody, but only the man who had gone through the austere discipline of Yoga and communed with the Divine would be able to interpret His purposes and translate them into action. Everybody is potentially a great Karmayogin, but not everybody is aware of the indwelling God, and not everybody is able to pierce the crusts of egoism and false appearance and reach the illimitable power-house of the Spirit. Once man the seeker is awakened enough to realise that he is the heir to immortality and the agent of the Divine, he becomes an irresistible leader of mankind; he is irresistible because he is guided by a Power, he becomes a Power, which no other merely human agency can stand against; he is irresistible beging now himself the arm of the eternal Consciousness-Force. He, the great Karmayogin, is in fact God manifesting Himself to average humanity; he has caught a glimpse of Infinity and seen in it both the auspicious God and the terrible God :

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

The God of Wrath, the God of Love are one,
Not least He loves when most He smites. Alone
Who rises above fear and plays with grief,
Defeat and death, inherits full relief
From blindness and beholds the single Form,
Love masking Terror, Peace supporting storm.
The Friend of Man helps him with Life and Death,
Until he knows. Then freed from mortal breath
He feels the joy of the immortal play;
Grief, pain, resentment, terror pass away.
He too grows Rudra fierce, august and dire,
And Shiva, sweet fulfiller of desire.

Apart from The Ideal of the Karmayogin group of essays, the paper also published some other sequences of articles that have since been collected as The Brain of India, The National Value of Art and A System of National Education. The Brain of India (which first appeared in October-November 1909), with its emphasis on the Brahmacharya-Yoga axis in education, has been referred to already in an earlier chapter (XI.i). The National Value of Art series appeared in November-December 1909, and A System of National Education followed in the early weeks of 1910. All these sequences bespeak Sri Aurobindo's constant preoccupation with the problems of right education in the context of the national resurgence. Sri Aurobindo's ideas on ends and means in the field of education were elaborated in later years, and the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education at Pondicherry has been trying over a period of twenty-five years to serve as a pilot project to translate his dreams and ideals into practice. But the germs of the Aurobindonian conception of integral education can be seen even in the series of articles published in the Karmayogin over sixty years ago.

The core of Sri Aurobindo's educational thesis is in the following passage :

> Every one has in him something divine, something his own, a chance of perfection and strength in however small a

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

> sphere which God offers him to tade or refuse. The task is to find it, develop it and use it. The chief aim of education should be to help the growing soul to draw out that in itself which is best and make it perfect for a noble use.

The essential things cannot really be "taught", they can only be helped to flower, as the sun's rays warm the bud to spread itself out petal by petal. "The teacher is not an instructor or task-master", says Sri Aurobindo; "he is a helper and a guide". And in education, as in other activities, the child should be helped to develop in accordance with his own svabhava, or complex of inborn aptitude, and not as the teacher or the parent secret of all true education, the teacher might still provide the catalysis and createthe proper atmosphere for the child :

> The best method of suggestion is by personal example, daily converse and the books read from day to day. . . This is a kind of good company, satsanga, which can seldom fail to have effect so long as sententious sermonising is avoided, and becomes of the highest effect if the personal life of the teacher is itself moulded by the great things he places before his pupils. It cannot, however, have full force unless the young life is given an opportunity, within its limited sphere, of embodying in action the moral impulses which rise within it.

Sri Aurobindo distinguishes in the functioning of buddhi or the intellect own complementary groups of faculties :

> The faculties of the right-hand are comprehensive, creative and synthetic; the faculties of the left-hand, critical and analytic. To the right-hand belong judgement, imagination, memory, observation; to the left-hand comparison and reasoning. The critical faculties distinguish, compare, classify, generalise, deduce, infer, conclude; they are the component parts of the logical reason. The right-hand faculties comprehend, command, judge in their own right, grasp, hold and manipulate. The right-hand mind is the

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

> master of the knowledge, the left hand is its servant. The left-hand touches only the body of knowledge, the right-hand penetrates its soul. The left-hand limits itself to ascertained truth, the right-hand grasps that which is still elusive or unascertained. Both are essential to the completeness of the human reason. These important functions of the machine have all to be raised to their highest and finest working-power. . .

A still higher range of faculties, exceeding those of both the right-hand and the left-hand, also await exploration and mastery : "sovereign discernment, intuitive perception of truth, plenary inspiration of speech, direct vision of knowledge to an extent often amounting to revelation, making a man a prophet of truth". The teacher's tasks would be to understand the way of nature, to open up possibilities, to put the child in the way of self-growth in consonance with his svabhava and the nation's genius, and to include in the regiment the whole are of education comprising the physical, vital, mental, moral and spiritual; and yet the teacher has to limit himself, all the time, to playing the paraclete, putting the "growing soul into the way of its own perfection".

In the six essays on 'The National Value of Art', Sri Aurobindo has differentiated between the three uses of Art : the purely aesthetic; the intellectual, educative or moral; and the spiritual. The aesthetic appeal, the sense of the beautiful exemplified through the play of colour, form, rhytmic and symbolic sound, has helped savage man to become the civilised man. But Art can also bring about katharsis, cittasuddhi or purification, and herein lies its educative or moral appeal :

> Poetry raises the emotions and gives its separate delight. Art stills the emotions and teaches them the delight of a restrained and limited satisfaction. . . Music deepens the emotions and harmonises them with each other. Between them, music, art and poetry are a perfect education for the soul; they make and keep its movements purified, self-controlled, deep and harmonious.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Higher still is the service of Art in awakening or satisfying the spiritual being or in advancing the growth of spirituality in the race :

> Spirituality is a single word expressive of three lines of human aspiration towards divine knowledge, divine love and joy, divine strength, and that will be the highest and more perfect Art which, while satisfying the physical requirements of the aesthetic sense, the laws of formal beauty, the emotional demand of humanity, the portrayal of life and outward reality, as the best European Art satisfies these requirements, reaches beyond them and expresses inner spiritual truth, the deeper not obvious reality of things, the joy of God in the world and its beauty and desirableness and the manifestation of divine force and energy in phenomenal creation. This is what Indian Art alone attempted. . .

Sri Aurobindo ends with the plea that "the spirit of old Indian Art must be revived" so that the whole nation may be "lifted again to the high level of the ancient culture—and higher".

Such, then, were his searching backward glances into India's past, such his significant explorations and findings; and such too was his clear vision of the unfolding future—"high. . . and higher"! Stationed on the perilous ridge of the ambiguous present, Sri Aurobindo yet commanded a view of both past and future in their incandescent vividness. He had come to the world with a mission : not simply to dream dreams not to see uplifting visions alone, but rather to pass from dream to supreme exertion, and from Vision to definitive Realisation. Hadn't the time come for him to shake off the clinging dust of the frustrating present and boldly take a leap into the Future? He listened with his stilled soul, he waited for the divine command. The Mother of the Radiances was dawning on the horizon, the unpredictable ades was being initiated by a sovereign compulsion. And the Karmayogin was expectant in the poise of utter readiness to break out into "another Space and Time".

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Chronology

15 August 1872		Birth of Sri Aurobindo, the third son of Dr. Krishnadhan Ghose and Swarnalata Devi.
1877-9	:	With his elder brothers, Manomohan and Benoybbushan, at the Loretto Convent School (Darjeeling), a boarding school mainly for European children in India.
1877-84	:	With the Rev. William H. Drewett and Mrs. Drewett at 84, Shakespeare Street, Manchester; educated privately by the Drewetts.
1884-90	:	St. Paul's School, London; won the Butterworth Prize in Literature and the Bedford Prize in History, as also a senior scholarship tenable at King's.
1890-92	:	King's College, Cambridge : First Class in Classical Tripos. Passed the I.C.S. open competitive examination, but failed to appear at the Riding Test, and was hence rejected.
8 February 1893	:	Entered the service of the Maharaja of Baroda.
1893-4	:	Articles entitled 'New Lamps for Old' in the *Indu Prakash*.
1895	:	*Songs to Myrtilla, and Other Poems*.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

1896	:	*Urvasie* : *A Poem.*
1899	:	Professor of English at the Baroda College.
April 1901	:	Marriage to Mrinalini Bose.
1902	:	Revolutionary work in Bengal.
Sept. 1904	:	Appointed Vice-Principal of the Baroda College.
1905	:	*Bhavani Mandir* (A Handbook for Revolutionaries dedicated to the service of Bhavani).
April-Sept. 1905	:	Acted as Principal of the Baroda College.
14 April 1906	:	Attended the Barisal Political Conference : the plunge into politics.
August 1906	:	Assumed charge as Principal of the National College at Calcutta and as Editor of the *Bandemataram*, a new English daily started by Bepin Chandra Pal.
December 1906	:	Attended the Calcutta Congress, presided over by Dadabhai Naoroji, and helped to give its Resolutions a militant tone.
July 1907	:	Arrested, but released on bail; prosecuted as Editor of the *Bandemataram*.
September 1907	:	Acquittal.
26 Dec. 1907	:	Attended the abortive Surat Congress and took a leading part in the deliberations of the Nationalist (Extremist) Party.
		Met Yogi Lele towards the end of December at Baroda.
January 1908	:	Realization of the Vedantic-Advaitic experience of utter silence of the mind under Yogi Lele's guidance for

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

three days.

Jan.-April 1907 : Yoga *and* Politics : complete inner calm sustaining hectic outer activity.

4 May 1908 : Arrest in connection with the Muzzaferpore Bomb outrage on 30 April 1908.

18 May 1908-
5 May 1909 : The Alipur Bomb Case : the Great Trial.

6 May 1909 : Acquittal.

30 May 1909 : The Uttarpara Speech, in which Sri Aurobindo described his prison-experiences & Narayana *darshan*.

27 June 1909 : Launching of the Weekly, *The Karmayogin*.

25 Dec. 1909 : 'Open Letter to My Countrymen'

February 1910 : Left Calcutta for Chandernagore.

4 April 1910 : Reached Pondicherry—henceforth "my place of retreat, my cave of Tapasya —not of the ascetic kind, but of a brand of my own invention" (Letter to Baptista).

1910-14 : Years of 'Silent Yoga': association with the Tamil revolutionaries, V.V.S. Aiyar and Subramania Bharati : the coming of the first disciples (Nolini, Amrita, Moni and others).

1911 : *Vikramorvasie : or the Hero and the Nymph*.

29 March 1914 : Mme. Mirra Richard (the Mother) met Sri Aurobindo and "recognized him as the well-known being whom I used to call Krishna".

15 August 1914 : In collaboration with M. Paul Richard and Madame Richard (the Mother), Sri Aurobindo launched *Arya*, the

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

		monthly philosophical magazine devoted to the exposition of Sri Aurobindo's synthesis of knowledge and his Integral Yoga.
22 Feb. 1915	:	The Mother's departure for France (and thence to Japan).
1915	:	*Ahana and Other Poems.*
December 1918	:	Death of Mrinalini Devi, wife of Sri Aurobindo, of influenza at Calcutta.
1919	:	*The Ideal of Human Unity* (reprinted from the *Arya*).
5 January 1920	:	Sri Aurobindo's Reply to Baptista, declining his offer of the editorship of a new nationalist paper.
24 April 1920	:	The Mother's second arrival.
1921	:	Discontinuance of the *Arya*.
		Love and Death; The Brain of India; *A System of National Education*; etc.
January 1922	:	The beginnings of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, with the Mother in almost entire charge of the management.
18 Nov. 1922	:	Sri Aurobindo's letter to C.R. Das, reaffirming his decision to remain in retirement at Pondicherry.
1922	:	*Baji Prabou : A Poem*; *Essays on the Gita* (reprinted from the *Arya*); *Speeches.*
1923	:	*Songs of the Sea* (English translation of C.R. Das's *Sagar-Sangit*).
1924	:	*The Century of Life* (The *Niti Shataka* of Bhartrihari in a free rendering).
24 Nov. 1926	:	The Day of Siddhi (Realization), when Sri Aurobindo experienced "the descent of Krishna into the physical", the descent, in other words, of the Overmind consciousness.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

1926-38	:	Complete retirement.
1933	:	*The Riddle of This World.*
1935	:	*Six Poems; Lights on Yoga.*
1936	:	*Bases of Yoga.*
23 Nov. 1938	:	Relaxation of the rules regarding Sri Aurobindo's complete retirement.
1939-40	:	*The Life Divine*, in two volumes.
1940	:	Sri Aurobindo declared himself publicly on the side of the Allies; composed the poem 'The Children of Wotan' in August; encouraged his disciples to contribute to the war effort.
1941	:	*Heraclitus.*
1942	:	Advised the acceptance of the Cripps Proposals for the solution of the Indian impasse.
15 August 1942	:	*Collected Poems and Plays*, in two volumes.
1946	:	*Poems, Past and Present; Hymns to the Mystic Fire.*
15 August 1947	:	Seventy-fifth birthday; also India's first Independence Day. "I take this identification", he said in his message to the nation, "not as a coincidence or fortuitous accident, but as a sanction and seal of the Divine Power which guides my steps on the work with which I began life."
1948	:	*The Synthesis of Yoga*, Part I.
11 Dec. 1948	:	The award of the National Prize (in absentia) at the Convocation of the Andhra University, Waltair; Sri Aurobindo's Message to the Convocation.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

1949	:	*The Human Cycle* (reprinted from the *Arya*—the original title being 'The Psychology of Social Development'); *Chitrangada*, a fragment; *After the War*.
1950	:	*Savitri* : *A Legend and a Symbol*, Part One.
5 Dec. 1950	:	The passing away of Sri Aurobindo, after a brief illness, in the early hours of the morning.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Glossary

Ahimsa	peace
Aman	non-violence
Badshah	king
Bania	member of the business community
Bapu	father, name often given to Mahatma Gandhi
Bhang	an intoxicant
Bhangi	a seavenger
Bharat	India
Chamar	a leather worker
Charkha	spinning wheel
Chapati	thin, flat, unleavened bread
Crore	unit of measurement which is equal to ten millions
Dal	association
Darshan	sight of a venerated person or deity
Desh	country
Dharma	religion
Dharna	a sit-down strike
Ghat	bank of a river
Goonda	hooligan
Goondaism	hooligonism
Guru	teacher
Hakumat	rule

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Hartal	stoppage of work
Himsa	violence
Islam	Mohammedanism
Inquilab	revolution
Istri	a woman
Jai	victory
Jalsa	a public procession
Jamait	an association
Jatha	numerous persons
Karma	action
Karmayogi	practical worker
Khadi	hand-spun and hand-woven cloth
Khalifa	head of the Muslim community
Kisan	a peasant
Kist	an instalment
Lakh	1,00,000
Lathi	stick
Lota	utensil
Mahatma	a high-souled person
Mahila	a woman
Murdabad	down with
Nari	a woman
Purna	full
Raj	commonly used for British rule in India
Sabha	a meeting
Sainik	sepoy
Samaj	an association
Sarhad	frontier
Satya	truth
Satyagraha	non-violent resistance
Satyagrahi	one who practises satyagraha
Seva	service
Swaraj	self-government

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Taluka	revenue division
Thana	police station
Vakil	a lawyer
Vidyapith	an institution of higher learning
Yuvak	young
Zalim	cruel
Zamindar	landlord
Zamindari	landlordism
Zindabad	victory

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Index

Alam, Maulvi Shams-ul, 69
Alipur Jail, 67, 173
Allahabad, 180
Amrita Bazar Patrika, 70
Ananda, 188
Anandamath, 175
Andamans, 188
Angad, 180
Arjuna, 84
Arnold, Mathew, 48, 55
Aryan, 185
Asia, 62
Assam, 172
Australia, 2, 75

Bandyopadhyaya, Upendranath, 88
Baker, Edward, 89
Balliol College, 53
Bande Mataram, 17, 62, 65, 143
Bankim Chandra, 173
Bankipore, 128
Bannerjee, G.D., 145
Banerjea, S.N,, 150
Barindra, 66
Barisal, 115, 192
Baroda, 4-5, 90
Basanti, 184
Basu, Bhupendranath, 70
Beachcroft, C.P., 94, 99, 112
Benaras, 192
Bengal, 7, 72, 192
Bengalee, The, 152
Bhattacharya, Abinash, 66
Bhavani Mandir, 188
Bibhishan, 180
Birley, L., 75
Bombay, 59
Bonar, Mrs., 20
Bose, Khudiram, 65-66
Bose, Raj Narain, 8-9
Bose, Sailen, 68
Bose, Satyendra, 91
Boycott movement, 135
Brahmo Samaj, 8
Brough, Colonel, 19
Browning, Oscar, 2, 52
Buddhism, 195
Burma, 169

Calcutta, 1, 10, 13
Cambridge University, 2, 21, 94
Campbell Hospital, 63, 95
Carlyle, 196
Chakravarti, Shyam Sunder, 65, 92
Chattra Bhandar, 124, 140
Chatterjee, Bejoy, 93
Chatterji, Bhuban, 77
Chesterton, 56
Chittaranjan Das, 183
Christianity, 195
Colet, Dean, 58
Collier, E.A., 18, 27
Congress, 9, 149
Conservative Party, 120
Cotton, Henry, 4, 21-22, 104
Cotton, James, 4, 22

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Curzon, Lord, 13, 63

Dacca, 128
Daly, Dr., 81, 87
Dakshineshwar, 69
Darjeeling, 1
Darshana, 195
Danton, 173
Dand, 52
Datta, Bhupendranath, 63
Datta, P.C., 142
Datta, Ullaskar, 94
David, 96
De Rozario, 8
De Souza Francis Xavier, 59
Deoghar, F.A , 128
Deshpande, Keshav Ganesh, 59
Devi, Swarnalata, 1
Dharma, 172
Dharma Rakshini Sabha, 169
Dhritarastra, 130
Drewett, 2
Dublin, 51
Duma, 149, 170
Dutt, Aswini, 183
Dutt, C.C., 66, 89
Dutt, Kanailal, 91

Egypt, 51
Englishman, The, 152
Eliot, 83
Elizabethan era, 94
Elphinstone College, 59
Emersen, 81
England, 4, 10, 17-18
Extremists, 150
Europe, 64

Faridpur, 115
Fascism, 196
Ferrers, M,, 59
French Revolution, 153
Frizoni, 123

Gaekwad of Baroda State, 4, 26
Gait, E.A., 72
Gandhari, 130
Ganga, 96, 169
Ghose, A.A., 18
Ghose, Dr. Krishnathan, 1
Ghose, M., 27
Ghose, Babu M.L., 151
Ghose, Nagendra Nath, 145
Ghose, Rash Behari, 145
Gita, 53
Gita Vakya, 174
Gladstone, 153
Godley, 42
Gokhale, G.K., 180
Golden Bengal Scare (Article), 145
Goliath, 96
Gosain, Nagendranath, 87
Greagan, 160
Gupta, B., 70
Gupta, Nolini Kanta, 66, 172

Holliday, F. L., 69
Hanuman, 180
Hardie, Keir, 104, 112
Hare, David, 8
Hare Street, 179
Hastings, Lord, 48
Hennell, John, 30, 38
Hindoo Society, 129
Hobbes, 135, 153
Hobhouse, 60
Home Rule Movement, 193
Hooghly Conference, 176
Howrah, 78
Howrah People's Association, 178

Indian Civil Service, 108
Indian Daily News, 152
Indian Penal Code, 75, 106, 114
Induprakash, 21, 152
Islam, 195

Jagannath, Chariot of, 187
Jowett, 53
Jugantar, 153

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Kanungo, Hem Chandra, 94
Karmayogin, 105, 117
Kashmir, 5
Kempsford Gardens, 48
Kensington Liberal Club, 22, 37 47, 53
Khulna, 23, 52
Kidkenay, 51
Kimberly, Lord, 21
King's College, 2
King, J., 110
Kingford, D. H., 64-65
Kolhatkar, A. B., 104, 114
Krishna, Sri, 84, 173

Labour Party, 104
Lahiri, Purno Chandra, 145
L' Avare, M , 173
Laurie, Magnus, 54
Leicester, 113
Lincoln, Abraham, 59
Locke, 153
Lockhard, 18, 27
London, 36, 108
Lupton, 57

MacDonald, Ramsay, 104
Macpherson, A., 22, 33
Mahakali, 197
Majlis, 21
Manchester, 2, 108
Marphy, Dr., 61
Max Mullar, 52
Mazumdar, Sardar, 90
Mejda, 159
Midnapore, 115
Mino Mohan, 46
Minto, Lord, 63, 193; Reforms, 179
Mitter, Sukumar, 128
Mitra, Krishna Kumar, 81
Mirzapore, 64
Moderates, 150
Morley, John, 64, 144
Montagu, E., 105
Mrinalini, 69, 139
Mukherjee, Jatindranath, 72
Mukerjee, Satish Chandra, 145
Mullick, Subodh, 142
Mymen Singh, 115

Nag, Bejoy, 172
Nagpur, 104
Nainital, 5
Nandakumar, P., 180
National College, 15, 139
National Council of Education, 16, 113, 135
National Party, 172, 189
Nazism, 196
Nivedita, Sister, 177-78
Norman, Hugh, 59
Norton, Eardley, 74, 76, 140

O'Grady, 121
Ooty, 5
Oxford, 53

Pal, B. C., 5, 170
Paris, 94, 111
Parnel, 98
Pentland, M Robert, 59
Phoenix Park, 98
Piggott, 98
Pioneer, The, 152
Poona Sarvajanik Sabha, 75
Pondicherry, 51, 53, 198
Pringle-Kennedy, 65
Porthero, G. M., 22, 35
Puranas, 88, 186

Rai, Lala L., 150
Rama, 180
Ramayana, 180
Ramakrishna Mission, 69
Ravana, 187
Raymond, L., 177
Rees, J.D , 103
Romania, 27
Roy, C., 78
Roy, Rammohun, 10, 173
Rousseau, 153
Rozario, Peter, 59

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Russell G. W. E., 24
Russia, 94, 170
Sanatana Dharma, 84, 171
Sarkar, Rajani, 65
Sarojini Naidu, 68
Sen, Baikunthanath, 176
Sen, K. C., 8
Sen, Sukumar, 146
Sen, Sushil, 64, 67
Shakespeare William, 76
Shillong, 139
Siberia, 170
Singh, Sir Pratap, 63
Spencer, 135, 153
Statesman, The, 152
St. George, 96
St. Paul's School, London, 2, 6
Surat, Congress session at, 80, 159
Swadeshi, 135
Swaraj, 97, 147
Sylhet, 192

Tagore, Debendra Nath, 8
Tantra, 195
Tewari, Padoo, 128
Tilak, Bal Gangadhar, 150
Times, The, 17, 105, 108
Tokyo, 148
Towers, Rev. Robert, 50-51
Trevor, 18
Trinity College, 51
Trichinopoly, 59
Tuticorin, 161
Twenty-four (24)—Parganas, 69

Upanishad, 175
Upadhyaya, Brahmabandhab, 63-95
Uttarpara, 169

Vaikuntha, 196
Vasudeva, 85, 170
Vedanta, 52, 126, 132
Vidyasagar, Ishwar Chandra, 50
Vivekananda, 63, 88, 173

Walker, F.W., 52
Work, 53
Wilde, Oscar, 60
Wilson, Roland, 38
Woolwich, 20, 28
Wylice, Curzon, 180

Yoga, 170
Yogic Sadhan, 173

Zacharia & Co., 60

G.M. College of Education
Raipur, Bantalab
Jammu.
Acc. No....5.4.38.
Dated..17..5..93

G.M.C.E.J
5438

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-G

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Dr. S.R. Bakshi is an eminent scholar of Modern Indian History and is the author of several works on Indian nationalism and freedom movement.

ISBN 81-7041-702-3

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

SOME OTHER BOOKS ON HISTORY

Bajracharya, B.R.
Bahadur Shah : The Regent of Nepal

Bajracharya, B.R. et al.
Cultural History of Nepal

Bajracharya, B.R. et al.
Modernization in Nepal

Bajracharya, B.R. et al.
Foreign Policy of Nepal

Bajracharya, B.R. et al.
Democracy and Economic Development in Nepal

Bajracharya, B.R. et al.
Political Development in Nepal

Bakshi, S.R.
Documents of Civil Disobedience Movement

Bakshi, S.R.
Documents of Non-Cooperation Movement

Bakshi, S.R.
Gandhi & Champaran Satyagraha

Bakshi, S.R.
Studies in Modern Indian History

Bakshi, S.R.
Arya Samaj, (Set of 2 Vols.)

Bakshi, S.R.
History of the Punjab

Bakshi, S.R.
Indian Freedom Fighters : Struggle for Independence (Contd. Series) (Set of 65 Vols.)

Desh Bandhu
Jammu-Kashmir & Laddakh

Eliphistone, M.
The Rise of British Power in India

Ganjoo, Satish
Afghanistan's Struggle for Resurgence

Gimlette, G.H.D.
Nepal and Nepalese

Choudhary, Sukhbir
Encyclopaedia of Indian Nationalism (Set of 14 Vols.)

Ilbert Courtenay
Indian Nationalism and British Policy

Joshi, Shankarlal
Nepal Under Amsuvarma

Kapur, M.L.
The History and Culture of Kashmir

Kaul, Santosh
Freedom Struggle in Jammu and Kashmir

Keith, A.B.
Speeches and Documents on Indian Policy (Set of 2 Vols.)

Khilnani, N.M.
Glimpses of Hindu America

Lovett, Verney
Nationalist Movement in India

Ralhan, O.P.
Jawaharlal Nehru and National Affairs

Ralhan, O.P. et al.
Documents on Punjab
(Set of 15 Vols. in 16 Parts)

Ravindra Kumar
Selected Documents of Lokamanya Balgangadhar Tilak
(Set of 4 Vols.)

Ravindra Kumar
Selected Documents of Lala Lajpat Rai (Set of 5 Vols.)

Vaidya, T.R.
Nepal : A Study of Socio-Economic and Political Changes

Vaidya, T.R. et al.
Social History of Nepal

Vaidya, T.R.
Prithvinarayan Shah : Founder of Modern Nepal

Vansittart, Eden
The Gurkhas

Ralhan, O.P.
Indian National Movement : Punjabi Martyrs of Freedom
(Set of 5 Vols.)

ANMOL PUBLICATIONS PVT. LTD.
NEW DELHI-110002

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant